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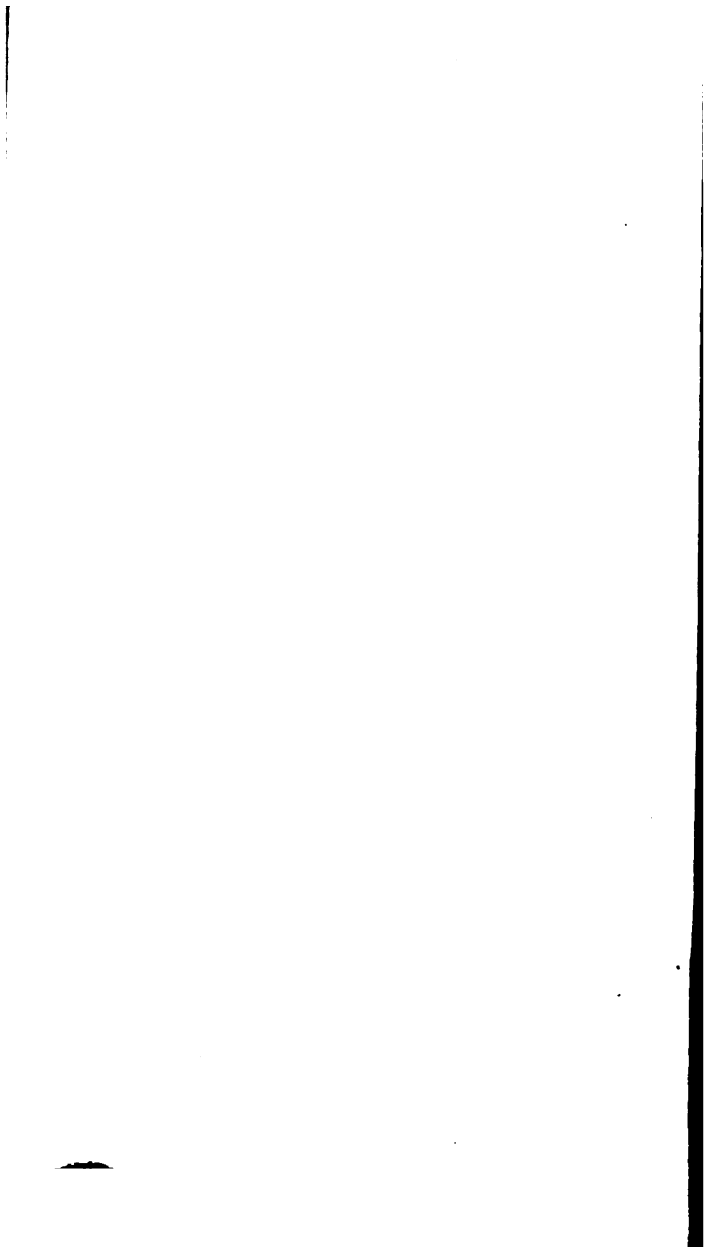
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In tali nunquam lassat venatio sylva.
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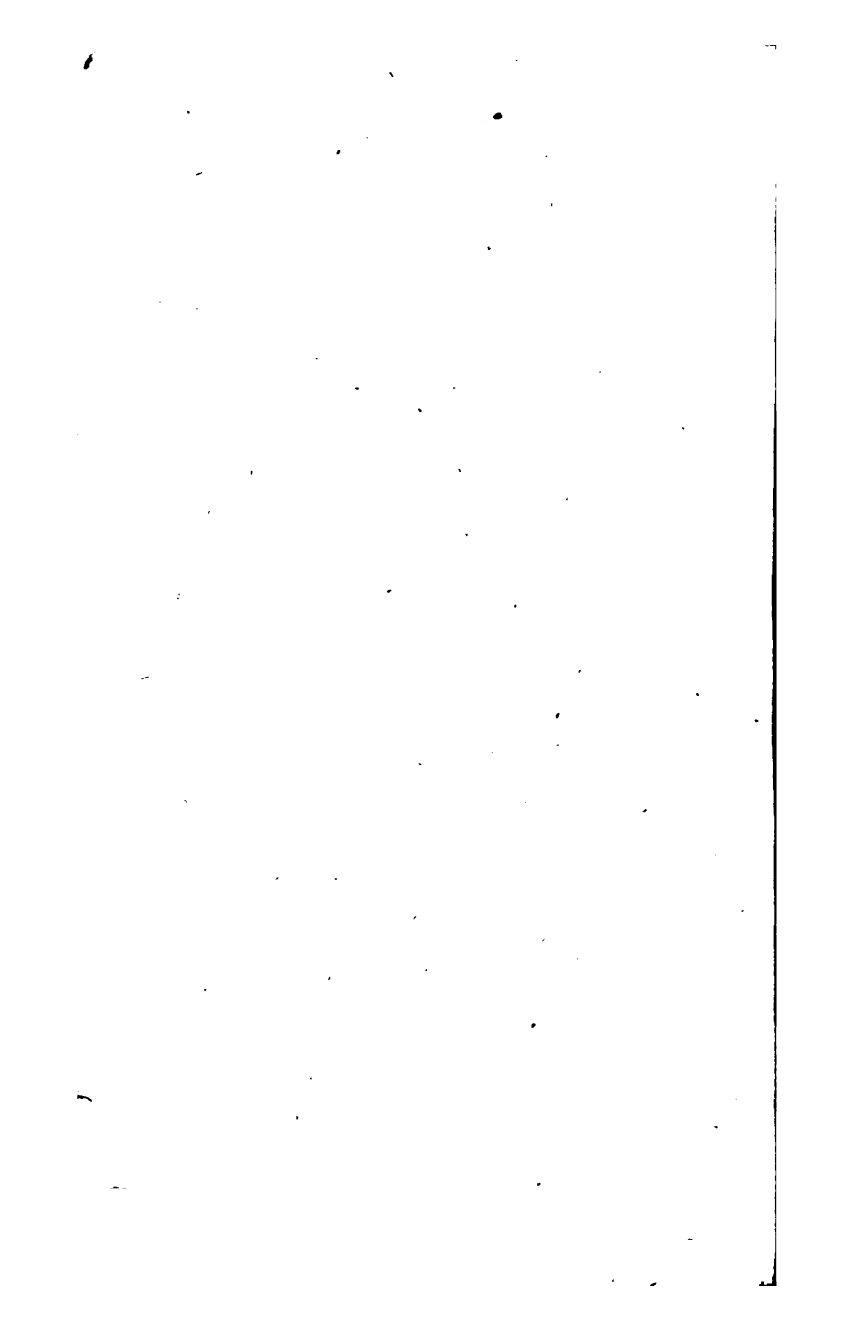
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THE
H I S T O R Y
OF THE MAN
AFTER GOD'S OWN HEART;

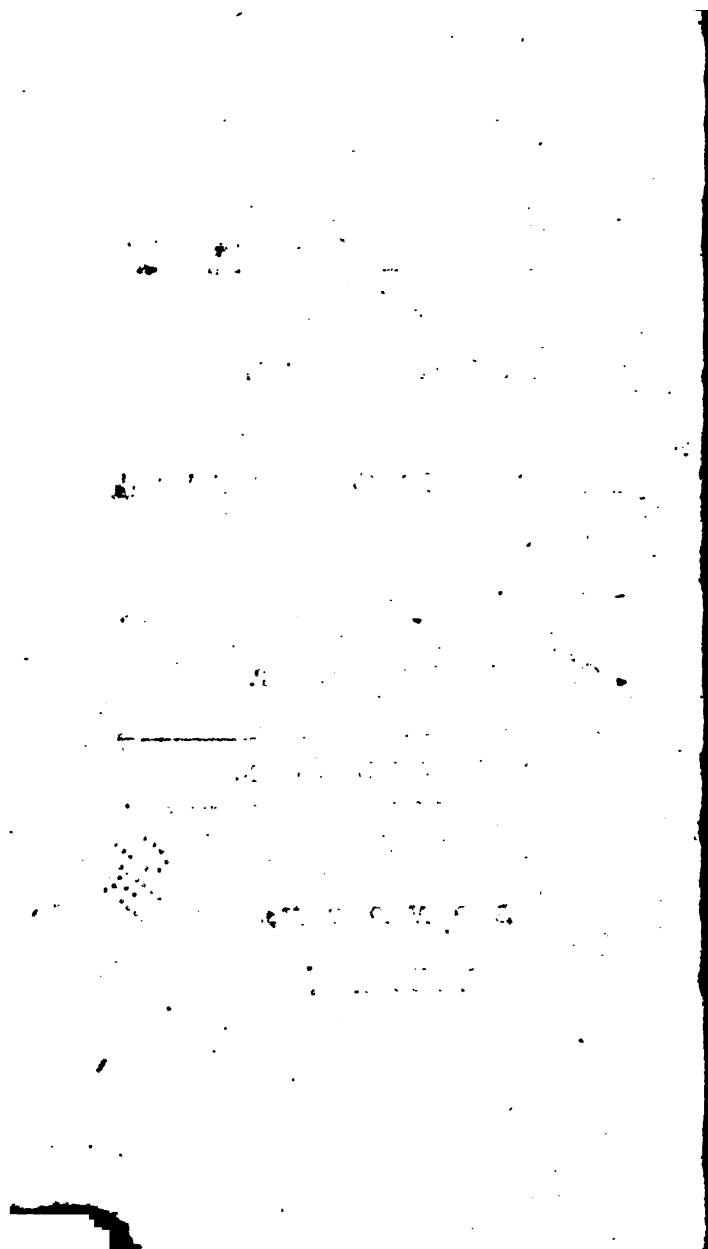
Omnia probate, bonum tenete. S. P.

A NEW EDITION.

L O N D O N :

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[iii]

TO THE REVEREND
SAMUEL CHANDLER,
D. D. F. R. & A. SS.

TO whom, Sir, could the republication of this little history with more propriety be addressed, than to a gentleman to whom it is under such considerable obligations? When it first appeared, it was

A 2

ho-

iv DEDICATION.

honoured with *your* notice in an especial manner: and is not a little benefited by your *labours*. You, Sir! with a *careful* hand noted its errors; and what has stood the test of your strictures is certainly established with additional authority. What ever might be the motives which influenced *so vigorous* an exertion of your *learned* and *critical* powers, powers so universally acknowledged and respected; the author of this piece will not now enquire: it is sufficient

DEDICATION. v

ficient to him, that they operated to the extending the knowledge of his tract, among that class of readers who stood most in need of the information it furnished: and he is persuaded you will with pleasure hear his assurances, that the work owes no small share of what approbation it may have gained, to your *elaborate Review* of it. Several worthy pious persons having candidly declared in private conversation, (and unknowingly to the author himself) that

vi DEDICATION.

the perusal of your book really strengthened the facts advanced in the history. For this therefore he considers you as entitled to his thanks: and that his acknowledgements might be as public as the obligation, no method of conveyance seemed more proper, than to prefix them to this new Edition of *The History of the Man after God's own Heart.*

He scorns, Sir, to follow the practice of Dedicators in common, who from venal motives
surreit

DEDICATION. vii

surfeit their patrons with fulsome adulation: he will not therefore call the blushes into your countenance, by expressing his private sentiments of your *learned* REVIEW of this Historical Sketch, farther than by one observation; which is, that had you been totally unknown in the republic of letters before, your apology for the death of Uriah would alone have raised your literary fame beyond the power of envious detraction. However, not to

A 4 offend

viii DEDICATION.

offend your modesty, he desists from farther encomiums ; but with a wish that you may long live to enjoy the reputation acquired by so *laudable* a performance, he concludes with subscribing himself,

S I R !

Your greatly obliged

and very humble

Admirer.



P R E F A C E.

SOME reverend panegyrist^a on our late king, have, a little unfortunately, been fond of comparing him with a monarch in no respect resembling him; except in the length of his reign, *thirty and three years*: which a lucky text informed them to be the duration of David's sovereignty over the Hebrew nation. Had our good old king died a year sooner, or had we
been

^a Dr. Chandler, Mr. Palmer, and others.

x P R E F A C E.

been indulged with him a year longer ; the opportunity of applying this text would then have been lost ; and in either case we might not have heard of the parallel.

A reverence for the memory of a worthy prince, has occasioned the world's being troubled with a new history of king David, (which, otherwise might not have appeared) meerly to shew how the memory of the British monarch is affected by the comparison.

Why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right ? is the language of Jesus Christ. Prove all things ; hold fast that which is good ; is the language

P R E F A C E. xi

guage of the apostle Paul. The liberty thus granted is unlimited ; but it is more than a meer grant of liberty, these are positive injunctions : let no one then be so timid as to resign an inclination to satisfy just doubts : in Britain, thanks to the obstinate heresy of our brave forefathers, no audacious Romish priest dare prescribe limits to the exercise of our reasoning faculties ; and protestant ones surely will not : nay they cannot ; consistently with those principles which justify their dissent from the romish communion. An honest desire to obtain truth, will sanctify the most rigid scrutiny into every thing. An apostle has told us, that we are not to believe even

even an angel from Heaven, who should preach any other gospel than that of Christ^b: and, no authority can be so sacred, as to set aside the *most valuable distinction of humanity*, with which our Creator has furnished us; or to give the lie to our most self-evident conceptions of right and wrong.

If that liberty of which Britons boast the possession, means any thing, it must primarily include freedom of thought; without which there can be no freedom of action. Thus it must mean an uncontrouled power to examine

^b Galatians i. 8.

mine the validity of every proposition offered to our assent : without which power and the due exercise of it, our assent cannot be the assent of rational beings. If the reformed religion means any thing, it must mean a religion founded by the authority, not of councils and synods, but of conviction, the result of private judgment. True protestants do not puzzle themselves about the decisions of Trent, Constance, or Dort ; they protest against all authoritative dictates : disciples of the meek, the lowly, the humane Jesus, they seek of themselves to judge of right or wrong. Who is most the protestant, the friend to human kind, and to truth ? those who appeal to the
human

xiv P R E F A C E.

human understanding, and submit to the public judgment whether things are really so or not; or those who say, they are so, they shall be so, you shall acknowledge them to be so, or else——?

Let not weak-minded christians who think truth not able to maintain its authority without legal enforcements, lament what they call licentious abuses of that liberty on which we are happy to congratulate ourselves: injudicious productions of the pen will always meet the treatment they deserve. Fallacious pretensions to reasoning cannot deceive mankind in these liberal times; nor can truth be obscured

P R E F A C E. xv

secured, when the attention of honest enquirers after it, is properly exerted. If the little historical sketch ensuing, and which in fact, exhibits no more than what we have all daily read without presuming to decide upon,—if it really is that audacious calumny which many roundly affirm it to be ; it will doubtless be considered as such : if, on the contrary, it contains undeniable matters of fact, fallaciousness will appear in the angry objections against it; and the writer trusts, the futility of such objections, have already been made sufficiently apparent.

The name of David has never been mentioned by divines but with the
greatest

greatest respect, from the time in which he lived to the present day ; and he is always quoted as an illustrious example of holiness ! so illustrious, that the greatest instance of purity that ever existed on earth, was frequently saluted by way of eminence, in reference to him, *Son of David* ! so illustrious, that on the death of the late king of Great Britain, many sermons were preached and published, in which, parallels are drawn betwixt him and this standard of piety, in order to justify encomiums on the former, by declaring how nearly he resembled the latter.

In

P R E F A C E. xvii

In what manner David first acquired, and has ever since maintained, this extraordinary reputation, is not difficult to deduce : he was advanced, by an enraged prophet, from obscurity to the Hebrew throne ; and taught by the fate of the unhappy monarch who was raised in the same manner, whom he supplanted, and whose family he crushed ; he prudently attached himself to the cause of his patrons, and they were the trumpeters of his fame. The same order of men, true to their common cause, have continued to sound the praise of this church-hero from generation to generation, unto the present time : in like manner the grand violator of the English

B

con-

xviii P R E F A C E.

constitution obtained the epithet of *holy Martyr*.

A new scrutiny being made how-
ever into David's claim to sanctity,
which, notwithstanding a very learned
defence of him, turned out so greatly
to his dishonour; the scene has been
shifted by a few whose sense has over-
balanced their bigotry by two or three
scruples. Some such, like Sheba of
old, blow the trumpet and cry, *We
have no part in David, neither have
we inheritance in the son of Jesse!* in
this manner have some clerical wea-
ther-cocks veered about to an opposite
point of the compass; and David who
'till now has been considered as a man
who

who *did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord, and turned not aside from any thing that he commanded him all the days of his life, save only in the matter of Uriah the Hittite*, has by one stroke of politics been resigned to the mercy of his detectors; and the importance of the detection endeavoured to be annihilated, as the easier task : all which appears with rather an ill grace, at a time when it is manifestly extorted.

Thus much being premised relating to the conduct of the champions for orthodoxy, on the occasion of this little squib which has produced so much bustle in the clerical hives, pro-

ceed we to say something of the tract itself.

The intention was, without any regard to remote objects, or heed of future consequences, which in fact ought *never* to be considered in investigating any point ; to give a fair undisguised narrative of the life and transactions of David king of Israel.

This however was not so easy to perform, as it was to project : from three difficulties which impeded the execution.

I. It is not easy to conquer the early prejudices of education in favour of the Hebrew nation ; which the careful
incul-

P R E F A C E. xxi

inculcation of their story during our infancy hinders our seeing in a proper light : so that relations which might shock humanity in what is called profane history, are read without any emotion but that of reverence, in *this*. This misconception is in great measure assisted

II. By their History being written *by themselves* : And difficult to be corrected,

III. By the broken unconnected manner in which it is transmitted down to us : which renders it impossible to give a compleat narrative of any period in it.

A common share of humanity, which a little attention to common sense enabled the author to extend to every nation under heaven as the objects of it, relieved him from the first of these difficulties : to overcome the other two, he has assumed the liberty of giving *his* sense to what appears dark, or misrepresented. ; which he hopes will not be denied him, so long as it is not found that a forced construction is put upon any thing cited : or that it is represented in any other light than what it naturally appears in, when considered with the freedom, which it is our duty to use in the examination of every historical record.

And

And lest it should be imagined that too great liberties are taken with the biblical writers; it may not be amiss to mention once for all, that innumerable instances might be produced, to shew that the authority of *the Lord*, so continually quoted to sanctify every transaction related; constituted for the most part, nothing more than national phrases, which obtained universally among so bigotted a people as on all occasions the Jews appear to have been: one twelfth part of whom were appropriated to the priesthood! A phraseology in some measure similar obtained in England, at that time, when shunning the cruel talons of papacy, the people rushed into the jaws of wild enthusiasm.

That the sense in which the acts of David are here understood, is the most obvious and natural, appears from the amazing pains it has occasioned his champions, to force another upon them. Of this, the life of David, by Dr. Delany, is a most remarkable instance; but the gross palliations, puerile conjectures, and mean shifts, to which he has been driven, prove the difficulty of the task; while they are too frivolous to bias any, but the most *Catholic* believers.

Mr. Stackhouse, in his History of the Bible, has urged arguments against particular passages, under the title of *Objections*; so cogent, that *his answers* to,

P R E F A C E. xxv

to, certainly could not be satisfactory even to himself.

Dr. Chandler has lately added his name to the list of David's apologists. Strange! that so holy a king should need the exertion of so much learned and critical dexterity, to establish his fame for goodness of heart! This gentleman's performance which was published as a reply to the first edition of the present work, is a very extraordinary piece; and shews that great learning is no security for soundness of judgment. The Doctor's book has been considered in a letter addressed to him, and published separately; to which the reader is referred

xxvi P R E F A C E.

ferred for an examination into the merits of his arguments. In answering the Doctor, new lights opened on many occurrences, which, as far as they could be detached from that particular controversy, are taken into the present edition.

T H E

[1]



THE
H I S T O R Y
OF THE MAN
AFTER GOD'S OWN HEART.

THE first establishment of regal government among the Hebrews, was occasioned by the corrupt administration of Joel and Abiah, the two sons of Samuel; whom he had deputed to judge Israel in the decline of his life^a. The people, exasperated at the oppression they laboured under,

^a 1. Sam. viii. 3.

2 THE HISTORY OF THE MAN

der, applied to Samuel for redress ; testifying a desire to experience a different mode of government ; by peremptorily demanding a King ^b. At this, however, Samuel was greatly displeased : not that his sons had tyrannized over the people ; for of that he takes no manner of notice ; neither exculpating them, nor promising the people redress : his chagrin arose from this violent resumption of the supreme magistracy out of the hands of his family ; a circumstance, for which he expresses great resentment ^c. He consults the Lord ; and, not knowing else how the insurrection might terminate, in his name yields to their desires ; promising them a king, with vengeance to them ^d. *For, says the Lord, they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them* ^e. The people nevertheless, resolving to free themselves from present oppression, at the hazard of the threatened judgments,

^b 1 Sam. viii. 5. ^c Ver. 6, &c. ^d Ver. 11, &c.
^e Ver. 7. compared with Ch. ix. 16. Ch. x. 1.

AFTER GOD'S OWN HEART. 3

judgments, obstinately persisted in their demand, and dispersed not without a promise of compliance.

Samuel to all outward appearance chose the most impartial method that could be of electing a king ; which was by lot, from among the people assembled by tribes : but, prudently pitches upon his man, previous to the election ; the whole tenor of his conduct manifesting that he intended to give them a king, in name ; but still to retain the supreme authority in his own hands, by chusing one who should continue subordinate to his dictates. Opportunely for his purpose, a young countryman named Saul, having rambled about to seek his father's asses, which had strayed ; and finding all search after them vain, applied to Samuel as a prophet ^f, with a fee in his hand, to gain intelligence of his beasts.

We

4 THE HISTORY OF THE MAN

We gather from several passages in Jewish history, that there were seminaries of prophets, *i. e.* the universities of the times ; where youth were trained up to the mystery of prophesying. We find there were false prophets, Non-conformists, not of the establishment ; we find that even the true ones were liable to be imposed on by their brethren ^s : and we find moreover, by this instance, that prophets did not disdain to give assistance in their prophetic character, concerning domestic matters, for reasonable gratuities. A chief among the prophets, one who had been a judge over Israel, is applied to, in a pecuniary way, for intelligence concerning lost cattle ^a.

It

^s 1 Kings xiii. 18. Josephus *in loco*.

^a Pretensions to divination continue to this day, though in the opinion of Reformed Churches all prophesying and miracles have long since ceased. These modern prophets are drolly ridiculed by our face-

AFTER GOD'S OWN HEART. 5

It has been said that this is the only instance recorded of a prophet being applied to for purposes of this nature ; but it appears, that it was usual

facetious countryman Butler in the person of Syrophel, a dealer.

*in destiny's dark councils,
Who sage opinions of the moon sells ;
To whom all people far and near,
On deep importances repair.
When brass or pewter hap to stray,
Or linen sinks out of the way ;
When geese and pullen are seduc'd,
And sows of sucking pigs are chous'd ;
When cattle feel indisposition,
And need sth opinion of physician ;
When murrain reigns in hogs or sheep,
And chickens languish of the peep.
When yeast and outward means do fail,
And have no pow'r to work on ale ;
When butter does refuse to come,
And love proves cross and humoursome :
To him with questions and with urine,
They for discov'ry flock, or curing.*

6 THE HISTORY OF THE MAN

usual for men to have recourse to prophets ; and that the phrase was—*come, and let us go to the Seer*¹: and that prophetic intelligence used to be paid for, is evident from the enquiry between Saul and his servant, concerning their ability to gratify him ².

But, to proceed ; Saul not only found his asses, but a kingdom into the bargain ; and had the spirit of the Lord given to him ³ ; which we find taken away ^m again, when he proved untractable : though it seems somewhat odd, how he could possibly prove disobedient, while he acted under the influence of this divine Spirit ! For, the possibility being admitted, the advantage of inspiration is difficult to be conceived !

After Samuel had in private ⁿ anointed Saul king, and told him his asses were already found, he dismissed him for the present. He then assembled

¹ 1 Sam. ix. 9. ² Ver. 7. 8. ³ 1 Ch. x. 6.
^m Ch. xvi. 19. ⁿ Ch. x. 1.

AFTER GOD'S OWN HEART. 7

sembled the people for the election of a king : at which assembly, behold, the lot fell on the tribe of Benjamin ; and in that, on the family of Matri ; and finally on Saul the son of Kish *. An election somewhat resembling consistories for the appointment of ^abishops ; where the person being previously fixed on, God is solemnly prayed to for a direction of their choice.

It is not intended here to give a detail of the reign of king Saul ; the notice hitherto taken of him being merely because the life of David could not be properly introduced without mentioning the alteration of government, and the manner in which monarchy was established in Israel : since Samuel's disappointment in Saul, naturally leads to his similar choice of David.

The disobedience of Saul, in daring to sacrifice without his patron the prophet ^p, who
C failed

* Ch. x. 20. 21. ^p Ch. xiii. 8—14.

8 THE HISTORY OF THE MAN

failed of coming according to his appointment ; and his lenity and prudence, in sparing the king, and some cattle, from a nation which Samuel in the name of the Lord had commanded him utterly to extirpate¹ ; irrecoverably lost him the favour of this imperious inexorable prophet : and in the end produced the miserable destruction not only of himself, but of his family : which will occasion no surprize, when we consider the absolute dominion and ascendancy which the Jewish priests maintained over this ignorant superstitious people. A dominion which every article in the Levitical Law enlarged and strengthened.

We are not to imagine that the sparing Agag, king of the Amalekites, was the only cause of this rupture between him and Samuel. For we may gather from other parts of his history, that Saul was not over-well affected toward his patrons the Levites² ; in subjection
to

¹ 1 Sam. xv. 3. ² Ch. xxii. 18, 19. xxviii. 9.

AFTER GOD'S OWN HEART. 9

to whom he had too much spirit to continue. Samuel quickly perceived he had mistaken his man, he haughtily avowed an intention of deposing him^f; and ordering Agag to be brought into his presence, he hewed him in pieces—*before the Lord*^t.

We now come to the Hero of the History.

In pursuance of his intention to make another king, Samuel went under the pretence of a sacrifice, and anointed another country youth^u, which was David the youngest son of Jesse, the Beth-lehemite; and gave him the Spirit of the Lord, which he had just taken from poor Saul. The king in the mean time reflecting on the precariousness of his situation, now that the priests, on the part of Samuel, were incensed against him; and well knowing their influence among his subjects, fell into a melancholy disorder of

C 2

mind,

^f 1 Sam. xiii. 14. xv. 26, 28.

^t Ver. 33.

^u Ch. xvi. 13.

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mind ^w; which his physicians were unable to remove ^z.

This was artfully made the occasion of introducing David to court. The king was advised to divert himself with music; and David was contrived to be recommended to him for his skill on the harp ^y. Saul accordingly sent to Jesse, to request his son; which was immediately complied with: and David was detained at court, in the capacity of the king's armour-bearer ^z.

Here the story begins to grow confused, beyond any-skill to reconcile. A war with the Philistines is abruptly introduced; in the midst of the relation of which, we are as abruptly informed that David returned from Saul to feed his father's sheep ^a again: from whence his father sent him with provisions for his brothers, who

^w 1 Sam. xvi. 14.
xvi. 18. ^z Ver. 21.

^x Josephus.

^y 1 Sam.

^a Ch. xvii. 15.

AFTER GOD'S OWN HEART. 11

who were in the army ^b. What can be thought of this? Jesse hardly recalled his son from the honourable post of armour-bearer to the king! it is not likely that he was turned off, since we afterward find him playing on the harp to the king, as before ^c; neither was it proper employment for the king's armour-bearer to be feeding sheep, when the army was in the field, and his majesty with them in person! Why—the most easy method, is to take it as we find it; to suppose it to be right, and go quietly on with the story.

In the Philistine army was a man of extraordinary size, named Goliath; who came out of their camp, day by day, challenging and defying any one among the Hebrews to single combat, and to rest the decision of their quarrel upon the event: an offer, which no one among the Israelites was hitherto found hardy enough to

C 3

accept.

^b 1 Sam. xvii. 17. ^c Ch. xviii. 10.

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accept^d. David is said to have arrived at the army just as it was forming for engagement ; at which time the giant advanced as before, with reproachful menaces : and after having enquired carefully concerning what reward would be given to the conqueror of this giant, and learning that great riches and the king's daughter were to be the prizes of conquest ; David courageously declared before Saul, his acceptance of the challenge^e, notwithstanding the contempt with which his offer had been treated.

Saul, relying on the youth's ardour, and assurance of victory ; girded his own armour on him^f : but David put it off again, trusting entirely to a pouch of stones, and his own skill in flinging^g. The success answered his hopes, and stamped what would otherwise have been deemed a rash undertaking, with a more respectable name : he knocked Goliath down with
a stone ;

^d 1 Sam. xvii. 4, &c. ^e Ver. 32. ^f Ver. 38.
^g Ver. 40.

AFTER GOD'S OWN HEART. 13

a stone ; then ran in upon him, cut his head off with his own sword, and brought it triumphantly to the king of Israel ^b. The consequence was, the defeat of the Philistines.

Here we meet with another stumbling block. For, though Saul, as has already been observed, had sent to Jesse expressly for his son David ; though David had played to him on the harp ; though Saul had again sent to Jesse, to desire that David might be permitted to stay with him ; and in consequence of this, had given him a military appointment about his person ; though he had now a fresh conference with him ; had just put his own suit of armour on him ; and though all these occurrences must have happened within a small space of time ; yet, his memory is made so to fail him on a sudden, that he knew nothing either of David, or his parentage ! but while David went to meet the giant, he enquired of

C 4

others

^b 1 Sam. xvii. 49.

14 THE HISTORY OF THE MAN

others who proved as ignorant as himself, whose son ¹ the stripling was ? This stumbling block must likewise be stepped over, for it is not removeable.

The reputation which this gallant action procured to David, soon gained him advancement in the army, and a warm friendship with Saul's son, Jonathan ². But the inordinate acclamations of the people, on account of the death of the Philistine giant, *Saul hath slain his thousands and David his ten thousands* ³; a rhodomontade out of measure extravagant, when we compare the two subjects of the contrast, justly occasioned Saul to view David with a jealous eye. We have all the reason in the world to believe that Samuel and the priests made every possible advantage of an adventure so fortunate for their intended king, to improve his growing popularity ; which even at its outset had so far exceeded

¹ 1 Sam. xvii. 55. ² Ch. xviii. 3. ³ Ver. 7.

AFTER GOD'S OWN HEART. 15

ceeded all bounds of decency : *What, said Saul, can he have more but the kingdom?* ^m and we may therefore conclude that the king saw enough to alarm him ; for we are told, that *Saul eyed David from that day and forward* ⁿ. Thus we find that on the day following, while David played as usual on his harp before Saul, the king cast a javelin at him ^o : which David avoided. Saul then made him captain over a thousand ; saying, *let not mine hand be upon him, but let the hand of the Philistines be upon him* : an expression however which is evidently put into Saul's mouth ; since it is impossible he could have made use of it openly. He made him the offer of his daughter Merab for his wife ; in consequence of the defeat of Goliath ; but she, we know not why, was given to another ^p ; afterward he gave him Michal : and David's modesty ^r on this occasion was incomparably well

^m 1 Sam. xviii. 8. ⁿ Ver. 9. ^o Ver. 11. ^p Ver. 17. ^q Ver. 19. ^r Ver. 23.

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well acted; he knowing himself at the same time, to be secretly intended for the kingdom, by Samuel.

Saul, upon reflexion, concluding it dangerous to execute any open act of violence against this young hero, politically hoped to ensnare him, by exalting him high in favour; or to get rid of him by putting him upon his mettle, in performing feats of valour: for a deficiency of courage is not to be numbered among David's faults. It was with this view, that the king yet required of him, an hundred Philistine foreskins¹, as the condition of becoming his son-in-law. He produced double the number *in full tale*².

This demand, after David appears to have fulfilled the prescribed conditions, seems not only unjust, but also, even making allowances for Hebrew customs, very ridiculously expressed.
It

¹ 1 Sam. xviii. 25. According to Josephus. 600 heads. ² 1 Sam. xviii. 27.

It must have been a glorious sight to have seen David bring the foreskins to king Saul, strung perhaps on a piece of pack-thread, and dangling in his hand; or thrown a-crofs his shoulders like a fash! and if Miss Michal was present, how must her pretty little heart exult when the required number being told off, as many more were gallantly presented at her feet!

David still advanced in his military ^v reputation; and met with a powerful advocate in the person of Jonathan, his brother-in-law and faithful friend; who effected a temporary reconciliation between him and Saul ^w: at which time Saul swore he would no more attempt his life. Nevertheless, whether it was that he could not get the better of his jealousy; or that he discovered more than is transmitted down to us, we know not; consequences incline us to the last conjecture; Saul made two more attempts to
kill

^v 1 Sam. xviii. 30. xix. 8. ^w Ver. 4.

18 THE HISTORY OF THE MAN

kill him ^x; from one of which he was protected by his wife Michal; and finding it not safe to stay at court, he fled to Samuel in Ramah ^y. Hither Saul sent messengers to apprehend him ^z; but these it seems seeing Samuel presiding over a company of prophets and prophesying, were seized with a spirit of prophesying also: and not only so, but it is related that Saul finding this, went at last himself, to just the same purpose; for he likewise prophesied ^a, stripping off his cloaths, in which ridiculous condition he continued for a day and a night.

This is an extream odd relation! That the solemn appearance of an assembly of prophets, presided over by a person so respectable, and heretofore of such great authority in Judea, might influence in an extraordinary manner persons entrusted with a commission to apprehend or kill a man patronised by these prophets, exhibits
nothing

^x 1 Sam. xix. 10. 11. ^y Ver. 18. ^z Ver. 20.
^a Ver. 23.

AFTER GOD'S OWN HEART. 19

nothing wonderful : they might easily perhaps be prophesied out of their errand ; and might then prophesy in concert. Prophecy is a vague term, not always limited to the prediction of future events ; the extempore preaching of many dissenters, and the discourses of the Quakers, who profess to speak as the Spirit gives them utterance ; seem to come under the term prophecy. These persons can work themselves and others into such fits of enthusiastic intoxication, that they believe themselves agitated by supernatural influence. Such might be the prophesying here mentioned. But Saul prophesied ! so it is said. Had the subject of Saul's prophesying been transmitted down to us, it might have greatly illustrated this passage in the history ; but no, he is barely said to have *prophesied* ; and we are prudently left to guess what. Being thus at liberty, we among other expeditors may easily surmise what he might take for his text, and what was the general tenor of his discourses, on this particular occasion.

Afterward

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Afterward David had a private interview ^b with Jonathan ; for he durst not venture to appear at court. At this meeting, Jonathan, who had conceived too great an affection for this man, and was at length seduced by him from the duty and allegiance which he owed to his father and king, solemnly promised ^c that he would sound his father's intentions on the next day, which being the festival of the new moon, David's attendance was expected at the king's table ; and that he would warn him of any danger intended him. David lay hid in a field until Jonathan brought him the required intelligence ; and when the king enquired concerning him, Jonathan, as had been before concerted, said that he had requested leave to go and perform a family sacrifice at Beth-lehem. Saul's reply on this occasion is very pertinent, and shews his antipathy to David not to have been the causeless inconstancy of a disordered mind. “ *Then Saul's anger*

^b 1 Sam. xx. 1.

^c Ver. 12.

ger was kindled against Jonathan, and he said unto him, Thou son of the perverse rebellious woman, do not I know that thou hast chosen the son of Jesse to thine own confusion, and unto the confusion of thy mother's nakedness? For as long as the son of Jesse liveth upon the ground, thou shalt not be established, nor thy kingdom: wherefore now send and fetch him unto me, for he shall surely die^d. Jonathan expostulated with his father, and had a javelin hurled at him for his reward^e.

David being advertised, according to agreement, of the king's disposition toward him, retired to Abimelech the high priest, at the city of Nob^f: who treated him with shew-bread, and armed him with the sword of Goliath; which had been hung up and consecrated to God^g.

We may consider David's resuming this sword, after its dedication as a religious trophy, whatever gloss may be put on his interview with Abimelech,

^d 1 Sam. xx. 30, 31. Josephus *in loco*. ^e Ver. 33.
^f Ch. xxi. 1. ^g Ver. 9. Josephus.

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melech, to be a clear manifestation of hostile intentions, or a declaration of war against his father-in-law ; for which he now took the first opportunity to prepare. Thus accoutred, he fled out of Judea, to Achish, king of Gath^h ; intending, as we have good reason to believe, to enter into a treaty of alliance with him against the Hebrews ; but the popular cry was against him before he accomplished any thing : or at least any thing that has reached our times. Here David appears to disadvantage in point of policy : for though his carrying with him the sword of Goliath, was artful enough, and likely to collect followers, in Judea ; since it was a continual witness of that prowess, which had gained him such extraordinary reputation : yet for him under this circumstance, to throw himself into the power of the Philistines ; among those very people, from whose champion he had ravished *that sword* ! was the highest imprudence ! and we perceive he might have suffered for it ; had not he made use of a stratagem
to

^h 1 Sam. xxi. 10.

to procure his release, which he effected by acting the madman ^l.—Mankind seems to have been very easily imposed on in those days !

David now thinking it time openly to avow his design of disputing the crown with Saul, went to a cave called Adullam : which he appointed the place of rendezvous for his Partisans. Here we are told he collected together a company of debtors, vagrants, and disaffected persons, to the number of four hundred ; and opened his rebellion, by putting himself at the head of this body of men ^k : men whose desperate situations under the government in being, rendered them fit agents to disturb it ; and proved the surest bond to connect them to a partisan thus embarked in an enterprise against it. Hither also came to him his father and all his brethren : and the first movement that he made, was to go to the king of Moab, to obtain a retreat for his father and mother, until he knew the event of his enterprize ^l.

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By

^l 1 Sam. xxi. 13. ^k Ch. xxii. 2. ^l Ver. 3.

24 THE HISTORY OF THE MAN

By the advice of the prophet Gad, David next marched into the land of Judah ^m: Gad, no doubt hoped that as the young adventurer was of that tribe, he would there meet with considerable reinforcement. When Saul heard of this insurrection, he pathetically laments his misfortune to those about him ; that they, and even his son Jonathan, should conspire against him ⁿ. Then started up one Doeg, an Edomite, who informed Saul, that he had seen David harboured by the priests in Nob ^o. Upon this, Saul summoned all those belonging to that city, before him, with Abimelech their chief ; who began to excuse himself as well as he could : but Saul remembering, without doubt, the threatening of Samuel, concerning the affair of king Agag ^p; and considering these priests as traitors from this corroborating evidence against them, he commanded them all to be slain, to the number of eighty-

^m 1 Sam. xxii. 5. ⁿ Ver. 7, 8. ^o Ver. 9.
^p Ch. xiii. 14. xv. 26. 28.

AFTER GOD'S OWN HEART! 25

eighty-five persons¹. Moreover, agreeable to the barbarous usage of that nation, the massacre included the whole city of Nob, man and beast, young and old, without exception².

Though the king's rage in this instance exceeded not only the bounds of humanity, but also of good policy; it nevertheless serves to shew how deeply the priests were concerned in the rebellion of David; since he could not be mad enough to commit so flagrant an act, without some colourable pretence³: and shews also that Saul had not so great an opinion of their holiness, as we, at this distance of time, are, by their own annals, instructed to have. Had Saul been more implicit; he might have enjoyed the name of king, have continued the dupe of the

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priests,

¹ Ch. xxii. 16. 17. 18. ² 1 Sam. xxii. 19.

³ In so small a territory as Judea, the difference between the king and his son-in-law, so popular a man, could not be unknown to persons in any measure removed from the vulgar. Therefore Abimelech's pleas of ignorance did not deserve credit.

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priests, have died in peace ; and his children have succeeded quietly to the inheritance. But,

*Ye Gods ! what havock does ambition make
Among your works !*

During this time, David rescued the city of Keilah from the Philistines ^t, who were besieging it, hoping to make it a garrison for himself. But upon the approach of Saul, not thinking himself able to maintain it, being as yet but six hundred strong ; and not chusing to confide in the inhabitants ; whose loyalty, even his recent kindness to them, could not corrupt : he therefore abandoned it, and retired to the wilderness ^u. This passage alone is amply sufficient to confirm the reality of David's rebellious intentions : it is therefore worth analysing. That he delivered this city from the depredations of the Philistines, and that by this action he hoped to purchase the friendship of the inhabitants, are acknowledged :
the

^t 1 Sam. xxiii. 3.

^u Ver. 13.

the use to which he intended to convert this friendship, is the point to be ascertained. Saul was advancing to suppress him. Had he seduced them from their allegiance, and obtained the expected protection, he would have deprived Saul of this city ; which city might have been considered as a garrison. The old plea of his providing only for his personal safety, against his malignant persecutor, has often been urged : But, his intended retention of a city to secure that safety, was a flagrant rebellious intention. Had he gained this one city, as his strength increased, he would have concluded as many more as he could have procured, necessary for his preservation ; until he had monopolized the whole country, agreeable to the grant of Samuel, which would then have justified the usurpation. But disappointed in the first step by the loyalty, miscalled treachery, of the Keilites, he evacuated the town, having lost the recompense of his labour, and with his men *went whither soever they could go* ^w. In the wilder-

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ness.

^w 1 Sam. xxiii. 13.

28 THE HISTORY OF THE MAN

ness, Jonathan came privately to see him, and piously engages in the cause against his own father, by covenant; in which it was agreed, that if David succeeded, of which Jonathan is very confident, *he* was to be a partaker * of his good fortune: but as Jonathan was not to join him openly, he went home again.

Saul having received intelligence of David's retreats, pursued him from place to place; until he was called off by news of an invasion of the land by the Philistines †: whether of David's procuring or not, we are uncertain: thus much is certain, and does not discredit the supposition; that he quickly after took refuge among those Philistines: After repelling the invaders, Saul however returned to the wilderness of En-gedi, in pursuit of David; with three thousand chosen men. At this place we are told of an odd adventure which put the life of Saul strangely into the power of David. He turned in to repose

* 1 Sam. xxiii. 16. 17. 18. † Ver. 27.

pose himself ² alone, in a cave, wherein at that very time David and his myrmidons were se-
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creted.

² The words are, *to cover his feet*: which Josephus and others, mistake to mean that he retired into the cave; to ease nature. But in Judges iii. 24. we find that expression to imply that the servants of Eglon king of Moab, supposed their master to have locked himself in, to repose himself with sleep, in his summer-chamber. This is farther corroborated in Ruth iii. 7. where, when Boaz had eaten his supper, he lay down on a heap of corn, doubtless to take his rest. Ruth, by her mother's instruction, went, *uncovered his feet*; and lay down by him; to have some refreshment likewise. For in the middle of the night when the man awaked, surprized at finding an unexpected bed-fellow, and demanded who she was: the kind wench replied, *I am Ruth, thine hand-maid: spread therefore thy skirt over thine hand-maid, for thou art a near kinsman.*

In the present instance, it is evident Saul slept in the cave; as he discovered not the operation that had been performed on his robe, till David called after him to apprise him thereof.

30. THE HISTORY OF THE MAN

creted ^a. This one would imagine to have been a fine opportunity for him to have given a finishing stroke to his fortune, by killing Saul, and jumping into the throne at once. But David knew better what he was about, than to act so rashly. He could entertain no hopes that the Jews would receive for their king, a man who with such great seeming holiness, should imbrue his hands in the blood of the Lord's anointed. Beside, what evidently destroys the boasted merit of David's forbearance toward Saul, in this instance, is an obvious, though overlooked consideration : that compared with David, Saul had a strong army with him ; and had the king been missing, had he been observed to enter the cave without coming out again ; and upon search had he been there found murdered ! there would not have escaped of all that pertained to David, any that *pissed against the wall*. Of this, David could not be insensible ; and therefore only privately cut off the skirt of Saul's robe ;

^a 1 Sam. xxiv. 3.

robe ^b; and suffered him to depart in peace. When the king was gone out from the cave, David calls after him, and artfully makes a merit of his forbearance, protesting an innocency, to which his being in arms was, however, a flat ^c contradiction. Saul freely and gratefully acknowledges himself indebted to him for his life, and seems so well convinced of his own precarious situation, that he candidly confesses it; only tying him down by an oath ^d, not to destroy his children after him. An obligation which, in due time, we shall see in what manner remembered and fulfilled by David.

Saul must certainly have been greatly fatigued, or strangely overseen, to have let David catch him at so great a disadvantage: a conduct not usual with good generals. Yet while we credit the relation, the meanness of his reply to David's harangue, can be no otherwise accounted for. Saul does not appear to have wanted resolution
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^b 1 Sam. xxiv. 4. ^c Ver. 8—15. ^d Ver. 21.

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on other occasions; but to acknowledge his assurance that David would obtain the sovereignty; and poorly to entreat a fugitive rebel in behalf of his family! is a conduct not even to be palliated, but upon the foregoing supposition. We must either condemn the general or the king: neither of which characters appear with extraordinary lustre upon this occasion. David on the other hand dissembles admirably here; pretending to Saul, a *great reverence* for the Lord's anointed; though conscious at the same time that *he was also* the Lord's anointed; and anointed purposely to supersede the other Lord's anointed: and moreover, was at this very time aiming to put his election in force! But—as the people were not of his council; and he knew their great regard for religious sanctions, it was certainly prudent in him, to set an example of piety, in an instance, of which he hoped, in time, to reap the benefit himself. About this time Samuel died^e.

We

^e 1 Sam. xxv. 1.

We next find our young adventurer acting the chief character in a tragi-comedy, which will farther display his title to the appellation of being a man after God's own heart.

There dwelt then at Maon, a blunt rich old farmer, whose name was Nabal. David hearing of him, and that he was at that time sheep-shearing ; sent a detachment of his followers to levy a contribution upon him ^f : making a merit of his forbearance in that he had not stolen his sheep, and murdered his shepherds ^g. Nabal, who, to be sure, was not the most courteous man in the world ; upon receiving this extraordinary message, gave them but a very indifferent reply, including a flat denial. *Who, says he, is David? and who is the son of Jesse? there be many servants now-a-days that break away every man from his master. Shall I then take my bread and my water, and my flesh that I have killed for my shearers, and give it unto men, whom I know not whence*

^f 1 Sam. xxv. 5—9.

^g Ver. 7.

34 THE HISTORY OF THE MAN

whence they be? ^h Upon receiving this answer, David, without hesitation, directly formed his resolution; and arming himself with a number of his followers, vowed, that before the next morning, he would butcher him, *and all that belonged to him* ⁱ. And how was this pious intention diverted? Why, Abigail, the charming Abigail, Nabal's wife, resolved, unknown to her spouse, to try the force of beauty, in mollifying this incensed hero: whose disposition for gallantry, and warm regard for the fair sex, was, probably not unknown at that time. Her own curiosity also might not be a little excited; for the ladies have at all times been universally fond of military gentlemen: no wonder therefore that Mrs. Abigail, the wife of a cross country-clown, was willing to seize this opportunity of getting acquainted with Captain David. And this motive certainly had its force, since she could not as yet have known David's intention: we may observe she was told of it by David at their meeting ^k.
She

^h 1 Sam. xxv. 10. 11. ⁱ Ver. 13. 14. 22. ^k Ver. 34.

She prepared a present, and went to David, saying very sententiously—*upon me, my Lord, upon me let this iniquity be* : ¹ judging very humanely, that could she get him to transfer his revenge upon *her*, she might possibly contrive to pacify him, without proceeding to disagreeable extremities. Nor was she wrong in her judgment ; for we are told—*So David received of her hand that which she had brought him, and said unto her, go up in peace to thine house ; see I have hearkened to thy voice, AND HAVE ACCEPTED THY PERSON* ^m. But however agreeable this meeting might have been to Abigail, we do not find that Nabal was so well pleased with the composition his wife had made for him ; for when he came to understand so much of the story as she chose to inform him of ; he guessed the remainder, broke his heart, and died in ten days afterward ⁿ : David loses no time, but returned God thanks for the old fellow's death, and then Mrs. Abigail was promoted

¹ 1 Sam. xxv. 24. ^m Ver. 35. ⁿ Ver. 37. 38.

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moted to the honour of being one of the Captain's Ladies °.

We are now told another story extremely resembling that of the cave of En-gedi. Saul again pursues David with three thousand chosen men ; again fell into his hands during his sleep ; only that here David stole upon him in his own camp ; he ran away with the king's spear and bottle of water ; and Saul went back again as wife as he came P.

The opinion of Mons. Bayle seems most probable concerning this adventure ; who looks upon it but as another detail of the former affair at En-gedi : and that, for very good reasons. For, upon a comparison of both, as laid down in the 23d, 24th, and 26th chapters of 1 Samuel, we may remark,

I. That in each relation, Saul pursues him with the same number of chosen men !

II. That

° 1 Sam. xx. 39.

P Ch. xxvi.

II. That both adventures happened at or very near the same place !

III. That in each story, David comes upon Saul in much the same manner, with-holds his people from killing him, and contents himself with taking away a testimonial of the king's having been in his power !

IV. That in the second account, when David is pleading the injustice of Saul's persecuting him, as he terms it ; he does not strengthen his plea by representing to him that this was the *second time* of his sparing him, when he had his life so entirely in his power ! and that Saul's pursuing him this second time, was a flagrant instance of ingratitude after what had happened on the former occasion !

V. That in the second relation, Saul, when he acknowledges David's forbearance and mercy to him in the present instance, makes no mention
of

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of any *former obligation* of this kind ; although it was so recent ! and in the main circumstance, so similar !

VI. That the historian, who evidently intended to blacken the character of Saul, and whiten that of David ; does not make the least observation himself, in the second narrative, of reference to the first !

These reasons prove beyond doubt that we are furnished with two relations of the same adventure. To account for the double record, and their variations, must be left to commentators, connectors, and harmonizers, who are used to compromise affairs of this nature.

David finding, that with his present strength, he was unable to maintain any footing in Judea ; puts himself once more under the protection of Achish, king of Gath ^a. Achish, who does
not

^a 1 Sam. xxvii. 1. 2. 3.

not appear to have been a very powerful prince, seemed to consider David alone, and David at the head of a little army, as two very different persons : for he now assigned him a place named Ziklag, for a habitation ; where he remained a year and four months *.

As he had now a quiet residence, those who entertain an opinion of David's sanctity, would be apt to suppose he would here confine himself to agriculture, to composing psalms, and to singing them to his harp : but David found employment more suited to his genius. It is not intended here to be insinuated that he might not sing psalms, at leisure times ; but his more important business was to lead his men out to plunder the adjacent country. We have the names of some nations as they are called, but which must have been small distinct communities, like the present camps of wandering Moors and Arabs, over whom he extended his depredations :

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* 1 Sam. xvii. 6. 7.

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these are the Geshurites, the Gezrites, and the Amalekites ^f. Of these people he made a total massacre, at those places where he made his inroads ! *saying, very prudently, lest they should tell of us, saying, so did David, and so will be his manner, all the while he dwelleth in the country of the Philistines* ^g. After thus carefully endeavouring to avoid detection, he brings his booty home, which consisted of *all*, which those miserable victims possessed ^h. He made presents, of this, to his benefactor king Achish ⁱ ; who, demanding where he had made his incursion ? was answered, against the south of Judah, &c. ^k intending by this falsity to insinuate to the king, his aversion to his own country-men, and attachment to him. *And Achish believed David, saying, he hath made his people Israel utterly to abhor him ; therefore he shall be my servant for ever* ^l.

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^f 1 Sam. xxvii. 8. ^g Ver. 9. 11.

^h Query, whether David might not compose a psalm upon this occasion ?

ⁱ Josephus. ^k 1 Sam. xxvii. 10. ^l Ver. 12.

The Philistines at this time collected their forces together to attack the Israelites. To which service Achish summoned David ^a, and met with a chearful compliance; *surely, says David, thou shalt know what thy servant can do* ^a. He accordingly marched his adherents, with the troops of king Achish: but when the princes of the Philistines saw a company of Hebrews in their army, they were much surprised, and questioned Achish concerning them. The account which Achish gave of them, did not satisfy the princes, who justly feared their captain might prove a dangerous auxiliary. *Make this fellow return, said they, that he may go again to the place which thou hast appointed him, and let him not go down with us to the battle, lest in the battle he be an adversary to us: for wherewith should he reconcile himself to his master? should it not be with the heads of these men?* ^b David was

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accord-

^a 1 Sam. xxviii. 1. ^a Ver. 2. ^b Ch. xxix. 4.

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accordingly dismissed, very much mortified at their distrust of him.

Here now was a signal evidence of David's righteousness! The Hebrews according to their own testimony understood themselves to be the favourite people of God; and David is delivered down to us as a distinguished character for piety among this peculiarly esteemed people. Yet could this very man without any hesitation freely join himself and company, to an army of uncircumcised idolators, marching with hostile intentions against his countrymen! His advocates indeed pretend that had his offers been accepted, he would nevertheless have gone over to the Israelites at the commencement of the battle: this is taking off the charge of one crime, by imputing to him another equally bad; a most base act of treachery! As however the Israelites, on the foundation of their own intimacy with the Deity, thought they had no more obligations

to

to a moral conduct towards the Heathens, than the Roman Catholics now imagine they have to keep faith with heretics; these advocates endeavour to preserve the piety of David's character, at the expence of what David, according to this method of arguing, did extremely well without, on all occasions; namely *Honesty*.

Upon his return to Ziklag, he found that, during his absence, the Amalekites had made reprisals upon him; had burnt Ziklag; and had carried off all the women captives^d. But in the relation, there is one remark well worth noting, which is, that *they slew not any, either great or small*—so much more moderation had these poor heathens in their just revenge, than the enlightned David in his unprovoked insult. If they came to avenge so savage an insult, it shewed great consideration in them to spare the innocent, the guilty being absent: if they only came on the common principle of plunder, the

^d 1 Sam. xxx. 1. ^e Ver. 2.

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bare comparison of the different treatment of the sufferers in each instance, speaks forcibly without amplification. Upon this misfortune, his band began to mutiny ; and were on the point of stoning ¹ him ; when he, who knew how to soothe them, enquired of the Lord what he should do ? and evaded their rage, by inspiring them with a resolution to pursue the Amalekites, and with the hopes of recovering all their losses. He, therefore, with four hundred picked men, set out on the pursuit ; and by the way found a stranger ² who had fainted : after recovering him, they gained, by his means, intelligence of their rout. David came upon them unexpectedly, at a place where they were without apprehension, regaling themselves after their success ; and though David's men recovered all they had lost, together with other booty ; and found their wives and children unhurt ; yet could not their captain resist so inviting an opportunity of gratifying his delight in bloodshedding : the pursuit and slaughter continued

¹ 1 Sam. xxx. 6. ² Ver. 11.

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tinued from the twilight (we know not whether of the morning or evening) of one day, until the evening of the next. None escaped but a party which rode upon camels ^b

Of the spoil taken from these people, David sent presents to the elders of his own tribe of Judah; *and to all the places where David himself and his men were wont to haunt*^c. By which means he kept them attached to his interest.

The dispute between the Philistine and Hebrew armies, did not terminate but by the defeat of the latter, the death of Saul, and of three of his sons ^d.

Such was the catastrophe of king Saul! a man advanced from the humble state of a shepherd, by the prophet Samuel, to be his deputy in the government of the Hebrew nation, under the specious name of king: a man, who, allowing

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for

^b 1 Sam. xxx. 17. ^c Ver. 31. ^d Ch. xxxi.

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for the *peculiar complexion* of the people over whom he was placed ; does not, on the whole, seem to suffer by comparison with any other king in the *same* history ; or whose character appears to be stained with any conspicuous fault, except that he was one degree less cruel than his haughty patron : and was disobedient enough to endeavour to be in effect, what he was only intended to be in name. On the whole, he appears to have been strangely irresolute and inconsistent with himself ; and is perhaps represented more so than he might really have been : but the undertaking to render himself independent was an arduous task for one in his situation ; therefore his actions and professions might sometimes disagree. However, it is impossible to argue from every expression that may be produced ; we must form our judgment from leading events, and corresponding expressions ; and determine as they tally with probability. If Saul himself, however he is represented as subscribing to it, was really assured of David's destination to supersede him by Divine decree, there was nothing

thing left for him but resignation: Can man fight against God? since therefore his continual aim was to destroy David, it argues against this assurance: and if Saul himself was mad, surely his soldiers were not: how came he to find an army as mad as himself, to persecute the Lord's appointed,

We shall now have an opportunity to observe the conduct of our hero in a regal capacity. The death of Saul facilitated his advancement to a sovereignty, to which he had no pretension, either by the right of inheritance; which was claimed by Ish-bosheth, a remaining son of Saul; nor by popular election, which Saul himself had the shew of: but by the clandestine appointment of an old prophet; which inspired him with hopes, of which, by arms and intrigue, he at length enjoyed the fruition.

David had returned to Ziklag but two days, when on the third, there came to him an Amalekite, who officiously informed him of the event of the battle between the Israelites and Philistines.

He

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He owned himself to be the person who killed Saul, after his defeat, at his own request : he being already wounded. He hoped to be well rewarded for his news, by David ; whose intentions were so well known, that he presented him with Saul's crown and bracelet¹. But alas, he knew not David, and perished in the experiment : David ordering him to be killed for daring to slay the Lord's anointed^m. David's treatment of this Amalekite, is agreeable to the customary rules of politics ; and has nothing therefore remarkable in it, farther than it is rendered so by peculiar circumstances. Saul was declared to be rejected by God, and David was the pretender to his throne ; it may therefore be imagined by some, that this man might have had some claim to *his* private gratitude, especially considering the account the Amalekite gave of the matter.

Who can help smiling at the relation of David's tearing his cloaths off his back, and bursting into

¹ 2 Sam. i. 10. ^m Ver. 15.

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into a sorrowful lamentation for the death of a man, to whose destruction he had so freely offered to lend assistance but just before?

Upon this alteration of affairs, David asking council of the Lord, was advised to leave Ziklag, and to go to Hebron one of the cities of Judah; whither he and all his men repaired ^a. There he got his partisans to anoint him king over Judah; at the same time that Abner, Saul's general, had, at Mahanaim, made Ish-bosheth, Saul's son, king over Israel ^o. It may be remarked here that David did not seem to claim in right of the sacred unction bestowed on him long since by Samuel. He realised his title indeed as soon as he could make it out; by the law of force. But if his divine title to the Hebrew crown was universally known, and if, as has been urged, Ish-bosheth had none at all, how came David's title not to be universally acknowledged? Did only one tribe believe in it? Yet,
David,

^a 2 Sam. ii. 1. • Ver. 4. 8.

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David, with the divine grant, was obliged to obtain the sovereignty by arms and intrigue ! just for all the world like the wicked who attain their desires by exactly the same means, to all external appearance. Upon this division of the kingdom, a battle was fought at the pool of Gideon, between the army of Ish-bosheth, commanded by general Abner ; and that of David, headed by Joab : victory declared in favour of the latter, with small loss on either side, except that Joab lost his brother Asahel, who was killed by Abner's own hand ^p.

We must here be content with general hints : being only informed that *there was long war between the house of Saul and the house of David : but David waxed stronger and stronger, and the house of Saul waxed weaker and weaker* ^q. What very much conduced to this, was an ill-timed quarrel between king Ish-bosheth and general Abner ; concerning one of Saul's concubines, with

^p 2 Sam. ii. 17. 23. ^q Ch. iii. 1.

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with whom Abner had been too familiar^r : and his resentment of the notice taken of this amour, occasioned a treaty to be negotiated between him and David, whom Abner engaged to establish over all Israel^t. David accepted his offer, but demanded as a preliminary, the restoration of his first wife, Michal^u ; who, during the disputes between him and Saul, had been espoused to another^v. This demand he likewise made openly, by an express message to Ish-bosheth^w ; who kindly complied with it : the poor man who had since married her, following her, weeping all the way^x.

It is impossible to avoid noting David's anxious disposition here : which could not be content with six wives, who bore him children^y, (no mention of those who did not) but was yet so warm, that it took the lead even in his most important concerns.—We will not pretend to assign the cause of

^r 2 Sam. iii. 7. ^t Ver. 12. ^u Ver. 13. ^v 1 Sam. xxv. 44. ^w 2 Sam. iii. 15. ^x Ver. 2, &c.

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of that sad disorder, the symptoms of which are described in the 38th Psalm.

After Abner had traiterously endeavoured to advance the interest of David ^y; he had an interview with him ^z; which, quickly after he returned, coming to the ears of Joab; he, who does not appear to have been acquainted with the secret spring which actuated Abner's zeal for the cause of David; represented to him the imprudence of admitting a man among them, who to all appearance came only as a spy. Unknown to David, he sent for him back again, and privately stabbed him, in revenge for the loss of his brother Asahel ^a. This was a most base piece of treachery, worthy the servant of such a master: to assassinate a man in cool blood, in revenge for an action which was committed in the heat of battle; in self-defence; and even after fair warning given.

Upon

^y 2 Sam. iii. 17.

^z Ver. 20.

^a Ver. 27.

Upon the murder of Abner, David again acts the mourner ^b; which has a greater probability of being sincere now, than when he grieved for the unhappy Saul; because the false Abner was preparing to do him essential service, by betraying his master's cause. But the event proved full as advantageous to David; as will presently appear.

When Ish-bosheth and his friends heard of the fate of Abner, who had been the very life of their cause; it dejected all their spirits: and two villains, named Rechab and Baanah, hoping to make their fortunes by the public calamity, went and murdered their master king Ish-bosheth, as he was reposing himself during the heat of the day: and brought his head to David ^c. But not reflecting on an obvious maxim in politics; they like the Amalekite before, who claimed the merit of killing Saul; soon found that he thought it adviseable to punish
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^b 2 Sam. iii. 31. &c. ^c Ch. iv. 5, &c.

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the traitors, whatever he thought of the treason^d.

Had David reflected on all the circumstances which led to this murder, with that tenderness becoming a person professing so much piety, his compunction would have greatly embarrassed him in the proper behaviour on this occasion. For if these two execrable villains deserved punishment, what did *he* merit who was the primary cause of so nefarious an action? Two poor rogues from subordinate views, effected by assassination what David sought at the head of an army; which naturally reminds us of the pirate and Alexander. So strangely do relative circumstances bias our judgment of things essentially alike. Had David aspired to no other sceptre than his shepherd's crook, the villains had not presumed on the usurper's gratitude; and Ishboseth, who was a quiet prince, might have reigned long an honour to himself and a blessing to his country.

Ish-

^d 2 Sam. iv. 12.

Ish-bosheth does not appear to have been a man of parts, qualified to contend with such an antagonist as David ; for nothing is recorded of him : Abner was the person who raised him ; and had he lived, would as easily have deposed him : and though no qualifications are a security against assassination, yet, as in the case of another unfortunate monarch, Darius, king of Persia ; such cowardly wretches generally take the advantage of precipitating misfortunes already commenced, that they may pay their court to the rising sun.

The murder of this unhappy son of an unhappy father, advanced David to the dignity to which he aspired^e. (though we shall see in a passage which reflects no great honour on him, that Saul had more sons yet living) He was now in his thirty-eighth year ; having reigned seven years and an half in Hebron^f over the tribe of Judah.

F

Although

^e 2 Sam. v. 3. 1 Chron. xi. 3. ^f 2 Sam. ii. 11.
Ch. v. 5.

Although David was now invested with that supremacy, which had been the aim of his endeavours since the time that Samuel inspired him with the spirit of——ambition; yet could not his enterprising genius continue satisfied with such an exaltation. The first object of his attention now, was the city of Jerusalem, then inhabited by the Jebusites; (but it was of no importance who inhabited it, if David conceived a desire for it) this city he besieged ^s; and the inhabitants relying on the strength of their fortifications, out of derision planted cripples on their ramparts to guard their walls; saying, *except thou take away the blind and the lame, thou shalt not come in hither* ^t. Nevertheless David carried the place, and made it his chief city ^l.

N. B. He supplied himself with more wives and concubines out of his new acquisition ^k.

While

^s 2 Sam. v. 6. ^t Gh. v. 6. Josephus. ^l Ch, v. 7. 9.

¹ Chron. xi. 5. 7. ^k 2 Sam. v. 13.

While he was thus amorously engaged, the Philistines hearing that he was made king over all Israel, came and disturbed him : but David according to the usual term *smote them*¹; and his strokes were always sufficiently felt.

The comic tale of David's bringing home the Ark, will not be long dwelt upon; it may only be remarked, that it was brought on a new cart drawn by oxen; and that Uzzah some way or other lost his life, or as the text reads, was smote *by the Lord*^m, for his impiety in saving the ark from being overturnedⁿ. But if *the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart*; the intention of Uzzah was indisputably good; and the alleged crime surely pardonable: the seeming exigency precluding all hesitation and reflexion. Had the ark been really overturned for want of

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this

¹ 2 Sam. v. 20. 25. ¹ 1 Chron. xiv. 11.

^m Query, whether the Lord did not sometimes smite by the hands of the priests?

ⁿ 2 Sam. vi. 7.

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this careful prevention, Uzzah might then, it would be naturally imagined, have been rather *smote* for neglecting to save it. However, it was no longer trusted to prophane hands, but carried the remainder of the way upon the more holy shoulders of the Levites °, with great parade: attended by musicians, and by David himself, who, dressed in a linen ephod, *danced before the Lord with all his might* p: and this, in such a frantic indecent manner, that he exposed his nakedness to the bye-standers. Wherefore his wife Michal sneered at him. *How GLORIOUS was the king of Israel to-day, who uncovered himself to-day in the eyes of the handmaids of his servants, as one of the vain fellows SHAMELESSLY uncovereth himself* q. David, it seems, was of a different opinion, for he told her he *would* play before the Lord; and would be yet *more vile* than she had represented him; adding—*and of the maid-servants which thou hast spoken of, of them shall I be had in honour* r. Some staunch zealots have very prudently

° 1 Chron. xv. 2. 15.

p 2 Sam. vi. 14.

q 2 Sam. vi. 20.

r Ver. 22.

prudently spiritualized this part of David's answer, and given the mystical sense of it: the prophane, who are content with the evident signification of words, having construed it no otherwise than into an insituation that he had no cause to be ashamed of what he exposed. Fie on them !

This story is concluded with a remark, as odd as the rest of it.—THEREFORE, *Michal, the daughter of Saul, had no child until the day of her death* ¹. For, if Michal had hitherto borne no children, neither to David, nor to her intermediate husband, her barrenness must have been constitutional : and, preceding her offence, could not be a punishment inflicted in consequence of it. Moreover, if on the other hand, she *had* borne children, and this disgrace to her, was the consequence of a resolution made by her husband David, that she should have no more children *by him* ; her quiet resignation under this imposed state of widowhood, is by inference a high compliment

F 3

pliment

¹ 2 Sam. vi. 23.

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pliment on this poor woman's conjugal virtue ! which was far from the historian's intention to bestow. Indeed, there is great reason to credit Michal, and to believe that David really behaved with all the extravagance she ascribes to him : for she appeared before this affair as a discreet kind of a woman ; no instance of folly being produced in her, unless the contrivances she made use of to save her husband from the effects of her father's rage, may be allowed to bear such interpretation. Whatever judgment however is passed upon Michal's censure of David's behaviour in this procession, it shewed great cruelty and ingratitude in him to fix so disgraceful a stigma on her ; and not to make allowance for female indiscretion : the worst name that could be bestowed on her fault.

After this, David smote the Philistines, not sparing even Gath, that city which had so humanely protected him[†]. He then smote the Moabites, putting to the sword two thirds of the nation,

[†] 2 Sam. viii. 1. 1 Chron. xviii. 1.

nation, by causing them to lie prostrate on the ground, and measuring them by lines ; *even with two lines measured he to put to death ; and with one full line to keep alive :* ^u so systematic was his wrath ! Hadadezar, king of Zobah, was the next whom he smote ; who, being assisted by the Syrians of Damascus, he next smote them ^w. Yet all this smiting and slaying, is so obscurely mentioned, that we know nothing of the offences committed against this mighty chief, to excite such blood-thirsty indignation. Indeed, the cause is, without much difficulty, deducible from the produce of these wars, which sufficiently indicate the nature of David's *thirst*. Great quantities of gold, silver and brass, are said to have been brought to Jerusalem ^x ; and the priests may with reason be supposed to be the instigators to these wars ; since we find all the plunder surrendered to them ^y. We have therefore no cause to wonder at the exalted praises

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they

^u 2 Sam. viii. 2 ^w Ver. 3. 5. 1 Chron. xviii. 3. 5.

^x 2 Sam. viii. 7. 8. 10. 1 Chron. xviii. 2. 4. 6. 8. 10.

^y 2 Sam. viii. 11. 1 Chron. xviii. 11.

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they have bestowed upon the instrument of their wealth. He is said to have *gat him a name, when he returned from smiting the Syrians*²—this may very easily be credited ; but it is to be feared that if the name he gat from the Jews, and that which he gat from the Syrians, were compared ; they would not accord extreamly well together.

David was at this time seized with a *temporary* fit of gratitude ; toward a lame son of his old friend Jonathan, named Mephibosheth : to whom he restored all the private patrimony of his grandfather Saul ; and took him into his family³ ; not without due consideration, it is to be supposed ; since by that means he kept him under his own eye. But this gratitude was not lasting ; for upon an accusation preferred against him by his servant ; David readily bestowed all Mephibosheth's possessions upon that servant⁴ ; yet—when the accusation was found to be false ; instead of equitably punishing the asperser
of

² 2 Sam. viii. 13. ³ Ch. ix. 1. ⁴ Ch. xvi. 4.

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of innocence, and re-inflating Mephibosheth in his former favour; he restored to him but half the forfeiture for his supposed guilt^c: leaving the villain Ziba in the quiet possession of the other half, as the reward of his treachery. But of this, in its proper place.

The next memorable act recorded of David, is the only acknowledged crime that he ever committed: all his other transactions being reputed *right in the eyes of the Lord*.^d

In the midst of an obscure detail of smiting and slaying; in revenge for the contemptuous treatment of some ambassadors, sent by him with compliments of condolance; but who, perhaps deservedly, were considered as spies; while Joab was with the army prosecuting the siege of Rabbah, a chief city of the Ammonites; David, then at Jerusalem, walking one evening on the roof of his palace, perceived, from that eminence, a handsome woman bathing herself^e. Fired with

^c 2 Sam. xix. 29. ^d 1 Kings xv. 5. compared with
1 Chron. xxi. 1. ^e 2 Sam. xi. 2.

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with the light, he sent to enquire who she was^d and understanding she was Bath-sheba, wife to Uriah, who was at that time opportunely absent in the army under Joab ; he caused her to be brought to him directly, (no ceremony in the case) and after gratifying his inclination, sent her home again^e. Some time after, the woman finding herself with child, naturally informed the king of it. He, never at a loss for ways and means, immediately ordered Uriah home^g ; of whom he enquired news concerning the operations of the campaign : and then dismissed him to his own house ; sending after him, a present of victuals^h. David intended the good man a little relaxation from the fatigues of war, that he might kiss his wife, and be cheated into a child more than he had a natural right to : but whether Uriah had received any intimation of the honour his majesty had done him ; or whether he honestly meant the self-denial which he professed ; we are not advertised : however, Uriah would not go home, but slept in the guard-

^d 2 Sam. xi. 4.

^e Ver. 6.

^h Ver. 8.

guard-room, with the king's servants ¹. David took care to be informed of this, and questioned Uriah concerning the reason of it. Uriah urged a scruple of conscience against going to enjoy any indulgence at home, while the ark, Joab, and the army, remained in tents in the open field ². He was detained another night; when David made him drunk ³, waiting to see what effect that might have. It was still the same; Uriah, like many other drunken men, was resolved not to go home. David finding him so obstinate, altered his plan of operations, and determined then to get rid of him for ever. To which intent, he sent him back to the camp, with a letter to the general. *And he wrote in the letter, saying, set ye Uriah in the fore-front of the hottest battle, and retire ye from him, that he may be smitten and die* ⁴. This instruction was accordingly complied with ⁵; and then Bathsheba, like another Abigail, was taken into David's seraglio ⁶.

Nathan,

¹ 2 Sam. xi. 9. ² Ver. 11. ³ Ver. 13. ⁴ Ver. 15.
⁵ Ver. 17. ⁶ Ver. 27.

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Nathan, the prophet, read David an arch lecture upon this subject^p; and he, who took care not to disagree with his best friends, bore with the reproof, and humbled himself accordingly.

This complicated crime committed by David, is universally allowed : but people think so little for themselves, that even *this* would be qualified, were it not found ready condemned to their hand in the relation of it. This crime is given up too, as the *only stain* in David's character : but the circumstances of it, will not permit this to be granted ; abstracted from any consideration of the man. For ; though a generally good man, may in a sudden start of any of the passions, lose government of himself so far, as to violate conjugal fidelity, or perhaps suddenly to kill another ; yet, a deliberate scheme, including *two* such crimes, can be concerted only by a *bad heart*. It is also to be remarked, respecting his famous repentance of this black transaction ; that he
shewed

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shewed no tokens of relenting until it was extorted from him by artifice ! and that even then, though he mourned his crime, he never entertained a thought of relinquishing future commerce with the woman so wickedly obtained, but kept her until he died ! and altered the regular course of succession in favour of a son he had by her !¹

It is hoped the supposition may be allowed, that the noise this righteous affair made, might be one motive for Joab's desiring David to come and partake some of the honours of the campaign : an opportunity of which he prudently laid hold : but——fatal was his presence wherever he appeared.

How shall a person subject to the feelings of humanity, (a security of more avail among men, than the most binding laws) how shall a man, not steeled to a very Jew, find expressions suited to the occasion, when he relates the treatment of this poor city Rabbah ? The study would be as difficult as unnecessary ; the simple unexaggerated

¹ 1 Kings i. 13. ² 2 Sam. xii. 27. 28.

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rated tale, if seriously attended to, will shock the humane reader sufficiently. The city was taken and plundered; and David *brought forth the people that were therein, and put them under saws, and under barrows of iron, and under axes of iron, and made them pass through the brick-kiln: ' and thus did he unto all the cities of the children of Ammon '.* The precise punishments here alluded to, are not understood at this time; writers being much divided in their expositions of these words: but that extraordinary punishments are meant, cannot admit of a doubt; for though *believers* expound the putting the Ammonites *under saws and harrows*, into the making slaves of them; and that these were the tools with which they laboured: yet

' It is supposed that the antient slavery of the Jews to the Egyptians, and the labour they were employed in by their lordly task-masters, the making bricks; might be a current reproachful jeer upon the Jews, when any quarrel happened between them and their neighbours; and that the making their prisoners pass through the brick-kiln, was a cruel method of revenging such affronts. A conjecture not improbable.

^t 2 Sam. xii. 31. 1 Chron. xx. 3.

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yet this will not agree with the latter of the texts whose authority is mentioned in the note; where it is said that he [David] CUT THEM *with saws, and with harrows of iron, and with axes!* And should more evidence be yet required, Josephus also writes that *the men were put to death by exquisite torments.* The general truth of the fact stands therefore unimpeached. And is it *thus* the people of God, headed by a man stiled in a peculiar manner, the man after God's own heart, used the prisoners of war? *Bella! horrenda Bella!*

It would not be easy to select any period of any history more bloody; or abounding more in wickedness of various dyes, than that which is the object of the reader's present attention. Instances succeed so quick, that the relation of one is scarcely concluded, but fresh ones obtrude upon notice.—But now horrors of a different hue demand our attention.

Amnon, one of our hero's sons, ravished his sister Tamar, and then turned her out of doors.

Abſalom,

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Abfalom, her brother by the same mother, seemingly took no notice of it, until two years after ; when he invited all his brothers to a feast at his sheep-shearing ; where he made Amnon drunk, and murdered him ^w : so deliberate, and yet so determinate was his revenge ! Abfalom, on this account, fled out of Judea, for three years ^x ; until, at the intreaty of Joab, he was invited home again, by his father, whose favorite he was ^y. But though he returned to Jerusalem, yet would not his father see him for two years ^z more.

Abfalom, during his exile, conceived a design of deposing his father ; for after their reconciliation, his first attention was to render himself popular. To this end he set up a splendid equipage ^a ; but politically increased his affability with his magnificence : rising up early, and planting himself in the way, to salute all who came to his father's levee. Of these he kindly enquired
their

^w 2 Sam. xiii. 28. ^x Ver. 38. ^y Ch. xiv. 21. 24.

^z Ver. 28. ^a Ch. xv. 1.

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their business, or grievances; throwing out hints of the king's remissness in the execution of justice; and how uprightly *he* would conduct himself, were their causes to be determined by *him* ^b. The profession of piety is universally, and was in particular, among this people, the most successful disguise for crafty designing men to assume. When Absalom, therefore, thought his scheme sufficiently ripe for execution, he desired leave of his father to go to Hebron, to perform a vow made by him while a refugee in Syria ^c. At Hebron he set up his standard, and his followers assembled in such numbers, and the defection was so general, that David thought it advisable to retire from Jerusalem ^d.

With him he took all his family and dependents, except ten concubines, whom he left in his palace to keep house ^e. The priests, Zadock and Abiathar, with the ark, would also have gone with him; but he thought it would be

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more

^b 2 Sam. xv. 2. 4. ^c Ver. 7. ^d Ver. 12. 14.
^e Ver. 16.

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more for his service for them to remain in the city as spies; to send him intelligence how matters went ^f. It is no inconsiderable part of politics to know how to suit men with proper employments. Ahitophel, his prime minister, joined the malecontents ^g; to balance which misfortune, David prevailed on Hushai, a trusty man of some importance, to remain in the city, that he might ingratiate himself with Absalom, thwart the counsels of Ahitophel, and transmit intelligence to him from time to time, through the conveyance of the priests, whose sons were to carry on the correspondence ^h. Having concerted matters thus, he evacuated Jerusalem, and Absalom entered ⁱ it.

When David was upon his journey from the city, he was met by Ziba, servant to Mephibosheth, with asses and provisions for his majesty's accommodation in his retreat ^k: of whom, when David enquired why Mephibosheth did not come with

^f 2 Sam. xv. 27. 28. ^g Ver. 12. 31. ^h Ver. 32, &c.
ⁱ Ver. 37. ^k Ch. xvi. 1.

with him; this treacherous servant told him that he staid behind at Jerusalem, hoping to obtain the kingdom of his grandfather, during this disturbance¹: by which lying aspersions, he gained a grant of all his master's possessions.

Here we may introduce a circumstance, which is so far material, as it serves to shew, that the sanctity of David was not quite so universally assented to, as may be imagined, while he was living; and his actions not only fresh in memory, but more perfectly known, than, possibly, was prudent to transmit to these distant ages.

As David prosecuted his flight, he was met by a man of Saul's family, whose name was Shimei. This man as he came on, kept muttering curses between his teeth, and at length cast stones at the king and his attendants, calling out to him, *Come out, come out, thou bloody man, and thou man of Belial: the Lord hath returned upon thee all the blood of the house of Saul, in*
G 2
whose

¹ 2 Sam. xvi. 3.

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whose seat thou hast reigned, and the Lord hath delivered the kingdom into the hand of Absalom thy son : and behold thou art taken in thy mischief, because thou art a bloody man ^m. This is pathetic, and truly characteristic of the person to whom the speech was addressed. Some of his retinue were at the point of silencing this brawler with the *ultima ratio regum* ⁿ; but David prevented it ^o, wisely considering this not to be a season for proceeding to extremities.

Absalom, in the mean time, being come to Jerusalem ; like a buck of Spirit, took the damsels which his father had left to keep house, and cuckolded the old man by way of bravado, on the top of it ^p; in a tent erected for this heroic purpose !

Ahitophel advised Absalom to select twelve thousand men, and pursue David directly, before he had time to recover his surprize ^q; which was
certainly

^m 2 Sam. xvi. 7. 8.

ⁿ The motto on French cannon. • Ver. 9. 10.

^p Ver. 21. 22. ^q Ch. xvii. 1.

certainly the best resolution that could have been formed. But Hushai, as was concerted, proposed a different plan of operations: opposing to the former, the well-known valour and military skill of the old king; and the hazard of making him and his men desperate ^r. He advised a collection of all the troops in the kingdom; that success might be in a manner insured: and that Absalom should command them in person. By which means, he affirmed that they should overwhelm David and his party, wherever they found him ^s. Hushai gained the ascendancy; and when he knew that his scheme was accepted, he gave immediate notice to the priests ^t: with instructions for David how to conduct himself ^u. David divided his forces into three bodies; commanded by Joab, Abishai, and Ittai: but by the prudent care of his men, was not permitted to hazard his person, by being present in action ^w. When he had reviewed his army, he gave his generals especial charge to preserve the

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life

^r 2 Sam. xvii. 8. ^s Ver. 11, &c. ^t Ver. 15.
^u Ver. 16. ^w Ch. xviii. 1. 2. 3.

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life of Absalom; and with a policy that reflects honour upon his military knowledge, expected the enemy in the wood of Ephraim ^x: a covert situation, being the most judicious that could be chosen, for a small army ^y to encounter one more numerous. David's men were tried veterans, among whom were the remains of those who served under, and lived with him at Gath ^z; whereas, Absalom's army must have consisted chiefly of fresh men. The battle decided in favour of David ^a; with great slaughter of the rebel army: and as Absalom fled on a mule, his hair, which is celebrated for its beauty and quantity, entangled in the boughs of an oak, and he remained suspended in the air; while his mule ran away from between his legs ^b. He was observed in this condition by a man who went and told Joab; and he, who consulted the safety of David, rather than his parental weakness in behalf

^x 2 Sam. xviii. 4. 5. 6.

^y According to Josephus, David had but four thousand men.

^z 2 Sam. xv. 18. ^a Ch. xviii. 7. ^b Ver. 9.

half of an unnatural son, killed Absalom with a dart ^c.

David grieved immoderately for this reprobate son, on whom he had misplaced a great affection ^d: and though he had acted the mourner on several former occasions, this is the only one, in which his sincerity need not be questioned. It is true he might be really concerned at the murder of Abner; but then circumstances ought to be attended to: Abner was killed prematurely; he had not finished his treacherous negotiation; David had much to hope from him; but—when his expectations had been answered, it is far from being improbable, that he would have found an opportunity himself to have got rid of a man, on whom he could have placed no reliance. But to return.

David was roused from his lamentations by the reproaches of his victorious General ^e, who flushed with success, told him the truth, but

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perhaps

^c 2 Sam. xviii. 14. ^d Ver. 33. Ch. xix. 4.
^e Ver. 5. 6. 7.

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perhaps told it too coarsely. It is evident that Joab now lost the favour of his master, ^{as} which the murder of Abner, the killing Absalom in direct contradiction to David's express order ; and lastly, his want of sympathy, and his indelicacy in the present instance, were the apparent causes.

After the battle, he invited Amasa, Absalom's vanquished General, to return to his duty ; very imprudently and unaccountably promising him the chief command of his army in the stead of Joab^t ; which was seemingly but an unthankful return for the victory that officer had just gained him, and for his attachment to his interest all along. Amasa, it is true, was a near relation ; but Joab, according to Josephus, stood in the same degree of consanguinity ; they being both the sons of David's sisters : this offer must therefore have been rashly influenced by his resentment against Joab, as beforementioned.

The

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The remains of Absalom's scattered army dispersed to their homes in the best and most private manner they could ^g: but David inadvertently plunged himself into fresh troubles, by causing himself to be conducted home by a detachment from the tribe of Judah ^h. This occasioned disputes between that and the other tribes. They accused Judah of stealing their king from them ⁱ. Judah replied, that they gave their attendance, because the king was of their tribe; and that it was their own free will ^k: the others rejoined that they had ten parts in the king, and that their advice should have been asked as to the bringing him back ^l. At this juncture, one Sheba took advantage of the discontent, *and blew a trumpet, and said, we have no part in David, neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse: every man to his tent, O Israel* ^m. The consequence of this, was a second insurrection. Amasa was ordered to assemble an army, to suppress it; but not proceeding with the

^g 2 Sam. xix. 3. ^h Ver. 11. 15. ⁱ Ver. 41.
^k Ver. 42. ^l Ver. 43. ^m Ch. xx. 1.

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the desired speed, Abishai was afterward commissioned with the same trust; Amasa and Abishai met and proceeded together, and were joined by Joab and his men. But Joab, not thoroughly liking to serve under a man he had so lately vanquished, and having as few scruples of conscience as his old master, made short work, stabbed Amasa, and re-assumed the command of the whole army ^a.

Being once again supreme in command, Joab proceeded directly to the reduction of the malecontents; who shut themselves up in the city of Abel of Beth-maacha: he battered the town, but by the negotiation of a woman, the inhabitants agreed to throw Sheba's head to him over the wall; which they performed ^b; and thus was quiet once more restored. Joab returned to Jerusalem, where we are told that he was General over all the host of Israel ^c. Not a syllable appears of any notice taken by David of the murder

^a 2 Sam. xx. 7. 9.

^b Ver. 15. 16, &c.

^c Ver. 23.

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der of the General by himself appointed : and of the assassin's usurping the command of the army.

Not finding room in its proper place, it shall now be noticed, that when David was returning to Jerusalem from the reduction of Absalom's rebellion ; with the men of Judah, who came to escort him, Shimei, the Benjamite ⁹, joined him at the head of a party of his own tribe. This man, who had at a former meeting, so freely bestowed his maledictions on David when a fugitive ; upon this change of circumstances, reflecting on the king's vindictive temper, came now to make his submission : David accepted his acknowledgements, and confirmed his pardon with an oath ^r.

We shall have occasion to refer to this passage anon.

Mephibosheth came also to welcome David on his return, and undeceive him with regard to the false

⁹ 2 Sam. xix. 16.

^r Ver. 23.

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false Ziba's representation of him ;—but he appears to have met with no other redress, than a remittance of *half the grant* made to Ziba of his estate ¹.

These intestine troubles put David upon pondering how to secure himself, as far as he could forecast, from any future disturbance.

It is the part of good politicians, not only to form wise designs themselves, but also to make proper advantage of public occurrences ; that all events indiscriminately may, more or less, lead to the purposes wanted to be obtained. Of this policy we shall observe David to be mindful in the ensuing transaction. Not that a panegyric upon his contrivance in this instance, is by any means intended ; for certainly a more bare-faced transaction was never exhibited : such indeed as could only have been attempted among the poor bigotted Jews. It is sufficient, however, that it answered David's purpose ; than which more could not have been expected from the most complete

¹ 2 Sam. xix. 29.

pleat stroke that refined politics ever produced. But, view it in a moral light, and certainly a blacker piece of ingratitude and perfidy can hardly be imagined.—It was impossible to continue the narrative without prefacing thus much.

David having with much trouble, from his competition with Ish-bosheth, established himself upon the Jewish throne; and having in the latter part of his reign been vexed, and driven to disagreeable extremities, by the seditious humour of his subjects, the rebellion of his own son Absalom, and the revolt of Sheba; his mind now fell a prey to suspicion. He called to remembrance, that some of Saul's family were yet living; whom, lest they should hereafter prove thorns in his side, he concluded it expedient to cut off.

Whenever David projected any scheme, a religious plea and the assistance of his old friends, were never wanting. A famine befel Judea; which continued three years; probably occasioned by the preceding intestine commotions. *David enquired of the Lord: and the Lord answered, it*

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is for Saul, and for his bloody house, because he slew the Gibeonites¹. But where is this crime recorded? Samuel charged Saul with no such slaughter: he reproached him with a contrary fault, an act of *mercy*! which is assigned as one of the reasons for deposing him. So that this crime was not recollected², till many years after the man was dead! and then God punishes—whom? a whole nation; with three years famine: which, by the bye, was not sent as a punishment neither; but merely as a hint of remembrance, which ended in hanging the late king's innocent children!

The

¹ 2 Sam. xxi. 1.

* If God sought vengeance for a particular act of cruelty, perpetrated by Saul; when was vengeance demanded for David's massacre of the *Edomites*, the *Moabites*, the *Ammonites*, the *Jebusites*, and others, who at times became the objects of David's wrath?

That the charge may allude to some former affair, is not contested; it is however truly remarkable, that there should be no chronological record of a fact, which after such a length of time demanded an expiation so awfully hinted, and so extraordinary in its circumstances!

The oracular response dictated no act of expiation; but only pointed out the *cause* of the famine. So that the Gibeonites (who by the way, had hitherto made no complaints that we know of) were applied ^w to, for a knowledge of what recompence they demanded? They required no gifts, neither that for their sakes David should kill any man in Israel; (which qualifying expression seems artfully intended; since they only required David to *deliver* the men *to them*, that *they* might kill them) but that seven of Saul's sons should be surrendered to them, that they might hang them up, *unto the Lord* ^x. David, not withheld by any motives of gratitude toward the posterity of his unhappy father-in-law, but in direct violation of his oath at the cave of Engedi ^y; granted the request he must himself have instigated ^z: sparing only Mephibosheth who luckily was so unfortunate as to be a cripple; and so much a dependent on David, and kept under his own eye, that he had

80

^w 2 Sam. xxi. 2. 3.

^x Ver. 6

^y 1 Sam. xxiv. 21. 22.

^z 2 Sam. xxi. 6.

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no room for apprehension from him. He therefore reserved Mephibosheth, in memory of another oath, between him and his father Jonathan. Mephibosheth, having such a shocking scene to contemplate, and, considering his decrepitude, might ^{be} (as he really was) with little hazard ~~be~~ preserved ; as an evidence of probity in this pious king.

A conscience of convenient flexibility is of great use : thus David being under obligation by two oaths ; forgot one, and remembered the other. When Creon in Oedipus was interrogated concerning his conscience, he replied.

—'Tis my slave, my drudge, my supple glove,
My upper garment, to put on, throw off,
As I think best : 'tis my obedient conscience.

David now, thinking himself securely settled, was moved both by God ^a and by Satan ^b, to cause his subjects to be numbered ; which is, oddly enough, imputed as a great sin in him
to

^a 2 Sam. xxiv. 1.

^b 1 Chron. xxi. 1.

AFTER GOD'S OWN HEART. 87

to require : for poor man, according to the premises, he was but a passive instrument in the affair— Even *David* should have his due. The prophet Gad called him to account for it : and as a punishment for this sin of compulsion, propounded to him for his choice, three kinds of plagues, one of which, *his subjects* thereby necessarily incurred. Seven years famine, three months persecution from enemies ; or three days pestilence^c. David chose the latter.

It may be as well to decline this story, as to enter into any more particular consideration of it. From the above state of the case, the intelligent reader will need no assistance in making his own private reflexions on it.

We have now attended David down to the decline of his life ; when his natural heat so far decayed, that no addition of cloathing^d could retain a proper degree of warmth. His physicians prescribed a young woman to cherish him

H.

in

^c 2 Sam. xxiv. 13. 1 Chron. xxi. 12.

^d 1 Kings i. 1.

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in his bed, by imparting to him a share of juvenile heat ^c. This remedy may be very expedient in cases of extream age ; but why beauty should be a necessary part of the prescription, is difficult to conceive. They sought a *fair damsel* ; and the damsel they found, was *very fair* ^f. Possibly David might himself direct the delicacy of the choice : but if his physicians intended it as a compliment to their master, it indicated a very insufficient knowledge of the animal œconomy ; thus to stimulate the old man, and harass a carcass already sufficiently worn out : whereas, a virgin of homelier features, at the same time that she would have furnished an equal degree of warmth, would have been less liable to put wicked thoughts in the patient's head ^g. However, the
historian

^c 1 Kings i. 2.

^f Ver. 3. 4.

^g “ Boerhaave frequently told his pupils that an old German prince, in a very infirm state of health, being advised to lie between two young virtuous virgins, grew so healthy and strong, that his physicians found it *necessary* to remove his companions. ”
Mackenzie on Health, p. 70. note.

AFTER GOD'S OWN HEART. 89

historian has taken care to inform us, that *the king knew her not*^h; an assertion, which from the premises, there does not appear any reason to controvert:

While the king lay in this debilitated extremity of life, he was destined to experience yet another mortification from his children: Adonijah, his eldest son, since the death of Absalom; taking advantage of his father's incapacity, foolishly assumed the title of kingⁱ, which, had he been a little less precipitate, would have soon fallen to him, perhaps, without contest. For though David afterward is represented as having secret intentions to alter the succession, yet the countenance shewn to his pretension by Joab the general, by Abiathar the priest, and even by all his other brothers^k; seem to indicate that had Adonijah been more prudent, we should not now have heard so much of the wisdom of Solomon. It is possible, Adonijah might, even as it was,

H 2

have

^h 1 Kings i. 4. ⁱ Ver. 5. ^k Ver. 9. 19. 25.

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have maintained his anticipated dignity ; had he not, like Saul before, slighted his most powerful friends. He made an entertainment, to which he invited all his brothers, except Solomon¹ ; but what ruined him, was his not inviting Nathan the prophet ; it was *there* the grudge began : and the exclusion from this merry bout, and the confidence of the party, caused the prophet's loyalty to exert itself², which might probably have been suppressed by a due share of Adonijah's good cheer.

Let not the writer be accused of putting a malicious construction upon every transaction he produces. Pray, reader, turn to your bible : in the tenth verse of the first chapter of the first book of Kings, you will find a remark that Nathan was not called to the feast. The very next verse begins, *WHEREFORE, Nathan spake unto Bath-sheba, the mother of Solomon, &c.*—He was certainly nettled at the slight put on him, and

¹ 1 Kings i. 9. 10.

² Ver. 11.

and some others, in not being invited to Adonijah's feast: else he would not have insisted on that circumstance; which had better been waved. The supposition is not so ridiculous, as has been represented, for surely the probability of Nathan's being corrupted, was not less than that of David's sons; who, yet, all of them, except Solomon, (who, had he been invited, had some private reasons to the contrary, which their proceedings shew them to have been aware of) were agreeable to settling the succession on their elder brother; though certainly as much interested in the disposal of the kingdom, as Nathan could be.

Nathan and Bath-sheba concert to inform David of this matter^a; where the affronted prophet could not forget the slight put upon him, but, it being foremost in his mind, he insists upon the circumstance of exclusion, in an earnest manner; *but me, even ME thy servant, and*

H 3

Zadok

^a 1 Kings i. 13.

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Zadok the priest, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and thy servant Solomon, hath he not called °; which spake the cause of his officious loyalty but too plainly. David here acknowledges the promise by which he waved the right of primogeniture, in favour of Solomon, Bath-sheba's son ^p. He now directed him to be set upon a mule, to be proclaimed and anointed king of Israel; by his appointment ^q. The acclamations of the people upon this raree-show, disturbed the opposite party at their table; and an event, so unexpected, quite disconcerted them; they all dispersed ^r; Adonijah ran to the tabernacle, and took sanctuary at the altar. He obtained of Solomon a conditional promise of pardon ^t; depending on his good behaviour ^t.

And

° 1 Kings i. 26. ^p Ver. 30. ^q Ver. 33. 38.

^r Ver. 41. 49. 50. ^t Ver. 52.

^t Solomon soon found a pretence ridiculous enough; but sufficient in his eyes, to get rid of Adonijah, when his father was dead.

And now, methinks, some gentlewoman of more than feminine patience, whose curiosity may have prevailed with her to proceed thus far, may here exclaim. ‘ It must be granted, Sir ! that ‘ David had his faults ; and who has not ? but ‘ what does that prove ? only that he was a man. ‘ If he was frail, his repentance was exemplary ; ‘ as you may perceive, if you can prevail with ‘ yourself to read some of his psalms. Indeed, ‘ after your ill-treatment of the scripture, it will ‘ avail little to tell you that you contradict ‘ those inspired penmen, who expressly stile ‘ David *the man after God’s own heart*. Nay, ‘ your writing against him under that epithet, ‘ shews sufficiently the rancour and impiety of ‘ *your heart* ; so that I am fearful there are small ‘ hopes of reclaiming you.’——Good madam ! hear me calmly, and we shall part excellent friends yet. Had David not been selected from the rest of mankind, why then—it is possible—hardly possible,—he might, pass in the gross, with the rest of the jewish kings. But, when he is exalted and placed in a conspicuous point

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of view, as an eminent example of piety ! he then necessarily attracts our notice in an especial manner : and we are naturally led to wonder that a more happy subject of panegyric had not been chosen. If he was an holy psalmist ; if he is stiled the man after God's own heart ; he also lived the life here exhibited : and his capability of uniting such contrarities, does but augment his guilt !

Yet, even in his psalms, he frequently breathes nothing but blood, and the most rancorous resentment against his enemies. Of these take a specimen or two, from the elegant *translations* out, of that transcendant pair of geniusses, Messieurs Thomas Sternhold, and John Hopkins ; in recommendation of whose version, and the taste of our countrymen, it may be truly affirmed, that their psalms have gone through more editions than the works of any other poet, or brace of poets whatever.

Psalms

AFTER GOD'S OWN HEART. 95

Pfalm lxxviii. 22. 23. 24.

*And he shall wound the head of all
His enemies also,
The hairy scalp of such as on
In wickedness do go.*

*From Basan I will bring, said he,
My people and my sheep,
And all my own, as I have done,
From dangers of the deep.*

*And make them dip their feet in blood
Of those that hate my name ;
The tongues of dogs they shall be red
With licking of the same.*

Again, in Pfalm lxxix. 24. 25. 26. 27.

*Lord, turn their table to a snare
To take themselves therein,
And when they think full well to fare,
Then trap them in their gin :*

And

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*And let their eyes be dark and blind,
That they may nothing see ;
Bow down their backs, and let them find
Themselves in thrall to be ;*

*Pour out thy wrath as hot as fire,
That it on them may fall,
Let thy displeasure in thine ire
Take hold upon them all.*

*As deserts dry their house disgrace,
Their seed do thou expel,
That none thereof possess their place,
Nor in their tents once dwell.*

Very pious ejaculations for whole congregations to sing to the praise and glory of God !

David's failings, as they are qualifyingly termed, are generally mentioned as exceptions to the uniform piety of his character : but, if David ever performed any truly laudable actions ; *those* are the real exceptions to the general baseness which stains the whole of a life uncommonly criminal.

The

The writer does not task himself to reconcile *ragine* and cruelty, with morality and religion ; there are commentators who love these knotty affairs ; to them they are left. When the vindictive tenor of any of David's psalms has been insisted on, the translation is immediately censured ; prudently enough ; as every one who has sense to perceive the incongruity between such bloody wishes and denunciations, and the acknowledged purity and mercy of the all-beneficent Father of nature, may not have learning enough to dispute about Hebrew points ; and to make them point what meaning he pleases. However, such an one, by comparing the labours of Hebrew critics, may yet be enabled to form some sort of judgment between them. For instance in that terrible 109th psalm ; it is certain, our Doctors in Divinity do not like it ; but, something must be done with it : some therefore say that the verbs are not translated in their proper tenses, and that prophetic declarations are thus mistaken for the psalmist's execrations : others again say, that to be sure they *are* imprecations, but not the
 impre-

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imprecations of David ; but those of his enemies on him, which he there only relates ! O happy men ! why do not we all learn Hebrew ? His exemplary repentance is pleaded ; is it any where to be found but in the psalms ? *By their fruits ye shall know them.* If David was ever truly pious, we shall certainly perceive it, in his behaviour on his death-bed. *There,* it is to be hoped, we shall find him forgiving his enemies, and dying in charity with all mankind. This is what all mankind in general make a point of ; from the faint to the malefactor. David therefore must certainly give us an extraordinary instance of his attention to this important evidence of contrition. But what shall we think when we see this Nero of the Hebrews die in a manner uniform and consistent with the whole course of his life ? What will be our reflections when we find him, with his last accents, delivering two murders in charge to his son Solomon ? murders still farther aggravated by the included crimes of ingratitude and perjury ! One of them to be executed on his old faithful general, Joab ; who
power-

powerfully assisted him on all occasions, and who adhered to him in all his extremities ; till at the last, when he had justifiable cause for chagrin : but who notwithstanding had not appeared against him in actual hostility : but only drank a glass of wine with the malecontents. It will avail nothing to plead the private faults of the man ; we are now to consider him as relative to David, in his public capacity. In which light we must loath the master, who died meditating black ingratitude, against so faithful, so useful a servant. For even his defection at last, may perhaps admit of being interpreted into a patronization of that particular plan for the succession, rather than into a rebellion against the superannuated monarch.

His other charge was against Shimei, who reviled David at his retreat from Jerusalem, during Absalom's rebellion ; but who made his submission to him when he returned victorious : and whose pardon David had sealed with a *solemn oath* ^u.

Attend

^u 2 Sam. xix. 23.

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Attend we now to the cause of these reflections:

After exhorting Solomon on his death-bed, to keep the statutes of the Lord; David proceeds:

Moreover thou knowest also what Joab, the son of Zeruiah, did to me; and what he did to the two captains of the hosts of Israel, unto Abner the son of Ner, and unto Amasa the son of Jether; whom he slew, and shed the blood of war in peace, and put the blood of war upon his girdle that was about his loins, and in his shoes that were on his feet.

Do therefore according to thy wisdom, AND LET NOT HIS HOAR HEAD GO DOWN TO THE GRAVE IN PEACE ^w.

This was afterwards fulfilled in the basest manner, by the administrator to this pious testament.

David concludes thus.

And behold, thou hast with thee Shimei the son of

^w 1 Kings ii. 5. 6.

AFTER GOD'S OWN HEART. 101

of Gera, a Benjamite of Bahurim, which cursed me with a grievous curse, in the day when I went to Mahanaim: but he came down to meet me at Jordan, and I sware to him by the Lord, saying, I will not put thee to death with the sword.

*Now therefore hold him not guiltless: for thou art a wise man, and knowest, what thou oughtest to do unto him; BUT HIS HOAR HEAD BRING THOU DOWN TO THE GRAVE WITH BLOOD^x. That is to say, 'It is true, I promised not ' to put him to death, but *thou* art a wise man, ' and knowest what thou oughtest to do: *thou* ' knowest thyself not to be bound by that obligation; therefore his hoar head, &c.' So saying, he expired!*

This command was also executed in a manner, worthy the son of **Such A Father!**

To take a retrospect view of the foregoing narrative; in few words may be seen the sum
total

^x 1 Kings. ii. 8. 9.

total of the whole. A shepherd youth is chosen by a disguised prophet to be the instrument of his revenge on an untractable king. To this end he is inspired with ambitious hopes, by a private inauguration; is introduced to court, in the capacity of a harper; and by knocking down a man with a stone, whom, if he had missed once, he had four more chances of hitting; and from whom, at the last, he could have easily ran away; he was advanced to the dignity of son-in-law to the king. So sudden and unlooked for a promotion, within sight of the throne, stimulated expectations already awakened; and Saul soon perceived reasons to repent his alliance with him. Being obliged to retire from court, he assembled a gang of Ruffians, the acknowledged outcasts of their country, and became the ring-leader of a lawless company of Banditti. In this capacity he seduces his brother-in-law Jonathan, from his allegiance and filial duty; and covenants with him, that if he obtained the kingdom, Jonathan should be the next person in authority under him. He obtains a settlement in
the

the dominions of a Philistine prince, where, instead of applying himself laudably to the arts of cultivation, he subsists by plundering and butchering the neighbouring nations. He offered his assistance to the Philistine armies, in the war against his own country, and father-in-law; and is much disgusted at their distrust of his sincerity. He however availed himself of the defeat and death of Saul, and made a push for the kingdom. Of this he gained only his own tribe of Judah: but strengthened by this usurpation, he contested the remainder with Saul's son, Ishbosheth, whom he persecuted to the grave: Ishbosheth being assassinated by two villains with intention to pay their court to the usurper. He is now king of Israel. In which capacity he plundered and massacred all his neighbours round him at discretion. He defiled the wife of one of his officers, while her husband was absent in the army: and finding she was with child by him, he, to prevent a discovery, added murder to adultery; which being accomplished, he took the widow directly into his well-stocked seraglio.

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He then repaired to the army, where he treated the subjected enemies with the most wanton inhumanity. A rebellion is raised against him by his son Absalom ; which he suppressed, and invited over the rebel-general, to whom he gave the supreme command of his army, to the prejudice of the victorious Joab. After this he cut off the remainder of Saul's family, in defiance to the solemn oath by which he engaged to spare that unhappy race : reserving only one cripple, from whom he had no apprehensions : and who, being the son of Jonathan, gave him the opportunity of making a merit of his gratitude. When he lay on his death-bed, where all mankind resign their resentments and animosities, his latest breath was employed in dictating two posthumous murders to his son Solomon ! and, as if one crime more was wanting to compleat the black catalogue ; he cloathed all his actions with the most consummate hypocrisy : professing all along, the greatest regard for every appearance of virtue and holiness.

These,

AFTER GOD'S OWN HEART. 105

These, Christians ! are the outlines of the life of a *Jew*, whom you are not ashamed to continue extolling, as a man after God's own heart !

This, Britons ! is the king to whom your late excellent monarch has been compared !

What an impiety to the majesty of Heaven !

What an affront to the memory of an honest prince !

It is with great joy the writer of these memoirs takes his leave of a story, with which, by this time, he is sufficiently disgusted. He entered upon it, however, from honest motives ; and he concludes it with the consciousness of having performed a work, which he flatters himself will prove acceptable to all who entertain adequate conceptions of the eternal rectitude of that Great Creator of the universe, whom they profess to adore. He despises all the pious ravings and anathemas which have been thundered against him by some reverend inquisitors : he expected them, has exposed them ; and hopes he may without

offence finally reply in the words of their forgotten master :—*Father forgive them, for they know not what they do.* Those who estimate a man's religion by his implicitness to prescribed notions, and who think it their duty to stifle their living objections in compliance to the dead letter; (for objections they will have, and very strong ones too) such have and will undoubtedly be shocked at this publication. Such may produce numerous texts in opposition to what is here produced; and can inspired writers be inconsistent with themselves? It is not at present necessary to discuss that question. Argue that point among yourselves; the printer will at least profit by your disputes; though you may happen to

—*Explain a thing 'till all men doubt it,
And write about the subject, and about it:
So spins the silk-worm small its slender store,
And labours 'till it clouds itself all o'er.*

This

AFTER GOD'S OWN HEART 107

This, yet, is none of his concern. The love of truth is a motive which ought to supersede every other consideration : for every other consideration is subordinate in comparison with it. Truth inquires no tenderness of investigation, and scorns all subterfuges. It is, when displayed,

*divinely bright,
One clear, unchang'd, and universal light.*

To rescue truth, therefore, from obscurity and disguise, is the most rational way of giving

*Glory to God in the highest ; and on earth peace :
good will toward men.*

F I N I S.

21.1.17

D A V I D

TRULY THE

GOOD MAN

WHICH THE

HOLY SCRIPTURES represent HIM;

OR, A

VINDICATION

OF HIS

CHARACTER

AGAINST THE

ASPERSIONS cast upon it, by the HISTORY of
the MAN after GOD'S OWN HEART.

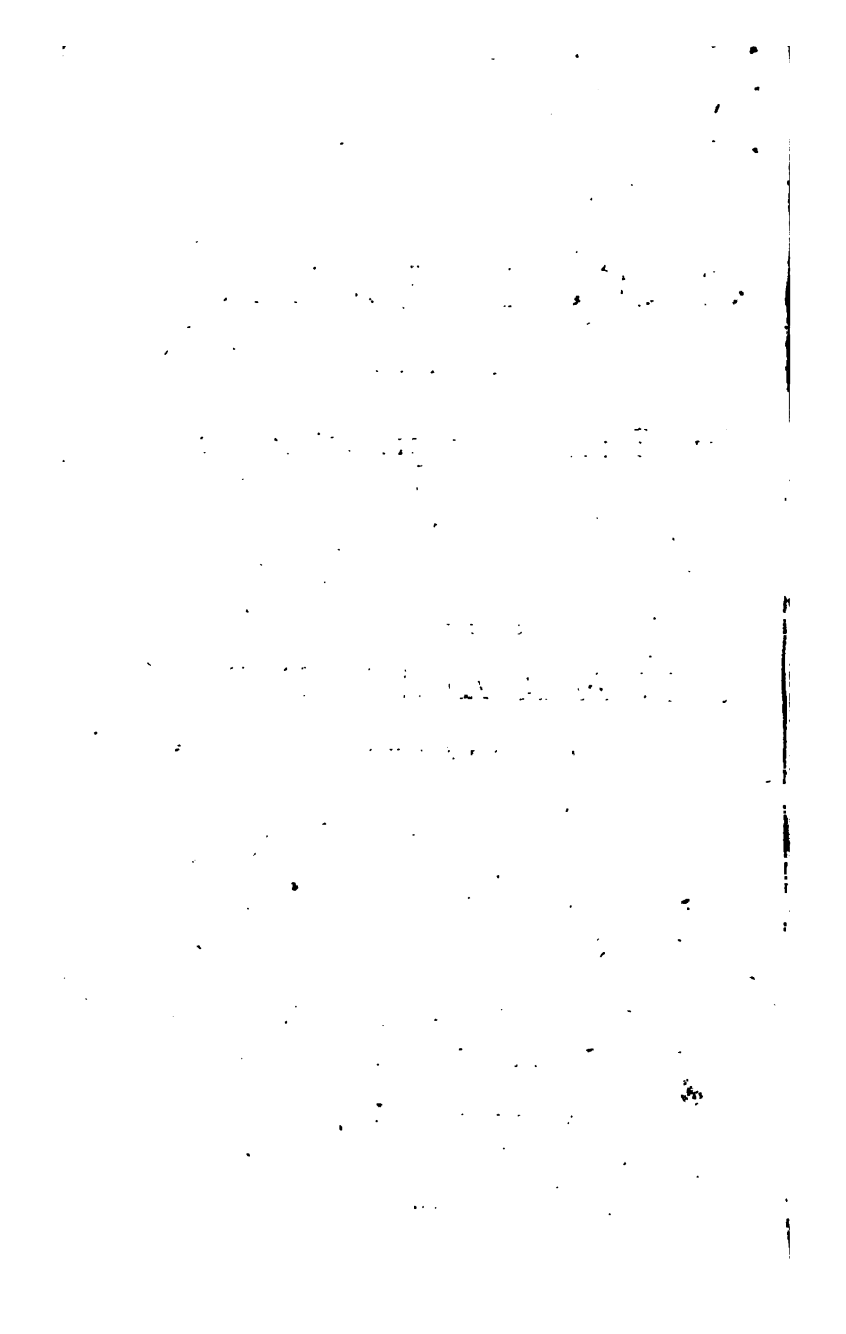
*For the time will come when they will not endure sound
Doctrine.*

By SMITH LOFTUS, A.M.
VICAR of COOLOCK.

DUBLIN:

Printed by G. FAULKNER in PARLIAMENT-STREET;

MDCCLXVI.



P R E F A C E.

A Desire to satisfy myself and a worthy friend who had a right to demand it of me, made me carefully read over, and write observations upon this history of the man after God's own heart. And now that they are made, it may be best to give them to the publick. Possibly they may do some good to it.

No sooner had I dipped into this treatise, than I perceived that a vindication of David's character was absolutely necessary if it could be given. Were he the very bad man which this writer represents him, it must throw a heavy reflection upon the Old Testament which so highly commends him, and upon the religion founded upon this book. And to effect this was doubtless the intention of his Author. An intention which he doth not even seek to conceal; for he every where speaks of these sacred records, not only without but contrary to all reverence.

It is true, that whilst the great proofs of our religion remain unimpeached, and this gentleman hath not at all meddled with them, nor have any of the infidel writers been able to hurt them, this attempt might be despised, for christianity would still remain certain to every impartial person tho' clogged with this difficulty. But it is no time to leave any the least prejudice upon the minds of men. It is now become fashionable among those who have the power to give the fashion, to throw

A. 2

contempt

P R E F A C E.

contempt upon religion, and when this is the case, there is nothing of the kind, however trifling, that may not do much mischief; and never was book better fitted for this purpose than that which I am going to consider. The stile, the reasoning, the ridicule of it are all captivating, and the man of genius is seen in every page of it; and his eagerness so great that he hath stuck at nothing to gain his point; and here he is drawn into such lengths as must hurt his own much more than David's character with every impartial person. This however is not a thing plain to every reader. His arguments are very plausible, and are offered with such confidence and seeming fairness that a closer examination is necessary to discover the falsehood of them than most readers, are inclined to give. In this matter then I have endeavoured to help them, and I hope I have succeeded in it. Had Dr. Chandler's answer been printed here, or could I even have seen it, it would probably have saved me this trouble, but since neither of these is the case, I have judged it better that we of this country should have rather an indifferent than no reply at all to such a book.

This gentleman must not be surpris'd that I take him for an infidel, such a hatred as he manifests, such treatment as he all along gives to inspiration, and the holy scriptures are utterly inconsistent with any belief of christianity.

A N S W E R



A N S W E R

TO THE

H I S T O R Y

OF THE

MAN after GOD's own Heart.

THE title of this book shows us that we are here to expect a violent attack upon revelation. The title is, the history of the man after God's own heart, and yet his whole treatise is to prove him a devil.

His dedication to Dr. Chandler seems over confident, but as I have not seen his book I can say nothing with certainty of it. Only this I may affirm; that from the excessive weakness of his arguments I cannot but believe that a defeat hath been received where a victory hath been boasted of.

Answer to the PREFACE.

THIS history tells us, that the author's regard for the memory of the late king, to whom David was compared, had occasioned the world to be troubled with his book. But, if this was his only reason, why hath he gone farther than this? why is the prophet Samuel and the whole old testament abused as wilful lyars, who exalt the character of David because obedient to the Priests, and depreſs that of Saul because he was not so?

Page 17. These things shew, that if this was one, he yet had other as powerful reasons to excite him to the work.

If by arguing for the liberty of a fair enquiry he would insinuate that our clergy are enemies to it, he cannot but know that he doth them injustice.

Pa. 14, 15. Licentiousness, or the abuse of liberty is most pernicious, misrepresentations of facts are not always easy to be seen through, some times hardly possible. Religion is under great disadvantages here; every wicked man is most violently tempted to wish such a one as christianity false, and an inclination of this kind must be most powerful to pervert the judgment.

Pa. 18. His account of the rejection of Saul and the exaltation of David will be hereafter fully examined.

Pa. 20, 21. He mentions the difficulties he had to conquer before he could give his narrative of king David. 1st. The prejudices of education: but to this I reply, that a love of the pleasures of this life hath always been too powerful for this motive to govern, and never more so than at this present time. Besides, the pride of being thought
more

more knowing than other men, peevishness, or a pique to a particular body of men, suppose of priests, a desire to quiet the conscience or to please the present temper of the time; any or all of these may easily serve to get the better of all religious prejudices. But prejudices of education are now frequent against religion. To the 2d reason I reply, that the history of their own affairs is ever best told by the people themselves, because they must be the best judges of them. The heathens have shewn the greatest partiality in their accounts of this nation, and published the most notorious falsehoods of it. To reason 3d I reply, an instruction in righteousness is the whole intention of this book: and how far, and with what particularity this is to be done can only be known to him who hath inspired the writing of it; the Scripture however is by no means so unconnected in it's history as this gentleman asserts.

Pa. 23. *That the authority of the Lord, so often quoted to sanctify every transaction related, constituted for the most part nothing but a national phrase,* is an assertion that destroys the authority of the whole Old Testament, this certainly requires full proof, but none at all is attempted: and yet if this be not granted him, and we cannot grant it without giving up our religion, his whole account of David will be found unjust. His casting such reflections upon three learned divines, who have been an honour to their country, will do him no service with the impartial reader. The most unjust of aspersions may often be very difficult to remove; and if his book hath occasioned so much bustle in the clerical hive, it doth but the more honour to these the teachers of christianity, that they are properly concerned for the safety of that faith which they are bound to protect. His comparing the inspiration of the antient prophets to
the

the false pretences to it in Charles the 1st time, will be noticed in a more proper place.

Answer to the HISTORY, &c.

THAT Samuel was displeased at the people's desiring a king, is certain; but the reason not directly mentioned in the text. That it was not, because his sons tyrannized over the people, but because they violently resumed the government from his family is neither expressed nor countenanced by the Scripture, tho' so confidently asserted by this author. The known integrity of Samuel leaves no room to doubt that he must have been extremely angry with his sons, when informed of *their taking bribes and perverting judgment*, the true reasons of the people's resentment; who when solemnly called upon before God and their king to witness whether the prophet had oppressed them in this or in any other instance, they all declare that he had not. And a man of this character could not but hate such proceedings in any other. Samuel might have expected, and most justly too, that they would have first informed him of these evils and tried whether he would not remedy them, but nothing of this kind appears to be done. He might have been, he must have been very angry with them for the reason assigned by God, 1 Sam. 8. 7. *For they have not rejected thee, but me that I should not reign over them*; this was a throwing off that government which the divine Being had appointed over them, and was consequently a rejection of his authority. And thus again it is said chap. 12, 12. *And when ye saw that Rabash the Ammonite came against you, ye said, nay but a king shall reign over us, when the Lord your God was your king*. Here then have we a sufficient reason for Samuel's anger, a reason plainly pointed out by the text, and vindicated by the whole life of the man, which was

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was every way worthy of a prophet, and totally repugnant to the character which this gentleman gives of him.

The scripture gives this account of the election of Saul, 1 Sam. 9. 15, 17. *Now the Lord had told Samuel in his ear a day before Saul came, saying, To-morrow about this time will I send thee a man out of Benjamin, and thou shalt anoint him to be captain over my people. And when Samuel saw Saul, the Lord said unto him, behold the man that I spake to thee of, this same shall reign over my people.* What therefore this author ascribes entirely to Samuel, and to him, urged on by the worst of motives, the Scripture entirely ascribes to God and to the prophet religiously obeying God, and which doth he think we shall believe? It is therefore all a fiction; the sacred text proves it to be so, that Samuel chose Saul only that he might be a cypher in the government, and he himself retain the whole power. A present was at that time, and is to this day in that country, a necessary form of introduction to every great man. His ridicule upon this matter is unworthy notice.

Pa. 4. True prophets were liable to be deceived in things not belonging to their predictions and office; but what evil can result from hence? Inspiration will be most fit for man when it doth not overpower but assist his freedom and faculties; and whilst he that gives it can beforehand tell what use will be made of it, will be as profitable in this as it can be in any other way. The divine Being who made Samuel anoint Saul, caused also the lot to fall upon him; there is nothing inconsistent in this or liable to ridicule.

Pa. 7. The Scripture gives this account of the rejection of Saul; when Samuel by divine appointment anoints him king, he, to shew by what authority he acted, foretells many things that should happen

happen to him, and orders him, Chap. 10. 8. *And thou shalt go down before me to Gilgal, and I will come down unto thee to offer burnt offerings—seven days shalt thou tarry till I come unto thee and shew thee what thou must do.* But because Samuel came not on the appointed day so early as he expected, * and his army began to scatter from him, therefore did he himself sacrifice. It is probable that by this action he invaded the priests office; but certain, that whether out of pride or a sinful distrust of providence, that he hereby disobeyed God. For this the prophet who came before the sacrifice was well ended, tells him, Chap. 13. *That he had acted foolishly, that he had not kept the commandment of the Lord his God, that his kingdom should not continue, and that the Lord had sought him out a man after his own heart.*

Samuel also by the divine direction, Chap. 15. sends him out to destroy the sinners the Amalekites, and to express the divine hatred and vengeance against sin, orders him to kill not only all the people both young and old, and all the animals also. But in this and in the former instance Saul disobeys. Agag the King, and the best of the cattle are spared. For this was he rejected by God. And that we may be sure that the prophet had the divine direction for the command he gave Saul, the 10th and 11th verses of Chap. 15. say, *Then came the word of the Lord unto Samuel saying, it repenteth me that I have made Saul to be king, for he hath turned back from following me, and hath not performed my commandment, and it grieved Samuel, and he cried into the Lord all night.* It was not therefore Samuel the priest as this writer would have

* The slowness of Samuel's coming to Saul might have been with design to leave him few people, that God might be the more honoured by gaining the victory with a few people.

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have it, but the God of the priest that Saul disobeyed ; and from this hand came all the destruction that afterwards befell this rebel king and his family. And if this order shall seem strange to any one, he is to consider that the divine Being is the greatest hater possible of all iniquity ; that he hath upon this account killed and will kill all the men that ever have been or shall be born ; and that one principal end of the Scripture is to convince us of the heinous nature and dreadful punishment of sin ; and doubtless it was one material reason for his choosing such a perverse people for his own as the Jews were, that the divine Being might hereby make the more signal display of this truth to the world. A truth ever necessary to be inculcated into fallen man, and never more so than in the present time. And it is to be considered, that when this the Creator-governor of the world, gives orders to destroy any men, it will be wickedness in the person not to do so. A private person will be criminal in killing, a magistrate will be criminal in forbearing to kill ; because he is obliged by authority to do so. In the Scripture narration we find nothing of Samuel's hatred to Saul, or design to dethrone him ; but on the contrary his ardent desire to preserve him, and his sorrow for him when he could not. When the prophet was informed, *that it repented the Lord that he had made Saul king, it grieved Samuel, and he cried unto the Lord all night.* And again, Chap. 15. and Verse 35. *Samuel mourned for Saul, and the Lord repented that he had made Saul king ;* and again, Chap. 16. 7. *And the Lord said unto Samuel, how long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from being king over Israel.* And that Saul himself thought him a true prophet, and not a deceiver and a rebel, as this writer represents him ; nay, and believed him to be not an enemy, but a friend to himself,

himself, is plain by his desiring the witch of Endor to bring him up Samuel's ghost, when God had deserted him. The author's whole account therefore of the rejecting of Saul is as surely false as the Scripture is true, and we shall find it equally so of the chusing of David.

Pa. 9. We now come to the Hesse of the history. The Scripture account of David's election is, Chap. 16. 1. Samuel is rebuked by God for still mourning for Saul, and ordered to go and anoint one of the sons of Jesse. Samuel at first expostulates, but afterwards obeys, and is so little informed of what he was to do, that he thought at first to have chosen the eldest son of Jesse, had not David there present; nor knew that Jesse had such a son. It is therefore all a fiction of this writer's, and that too directly contradictory to the Scripture, to ascribe the election of David, Saul's melancholly, and the bringing of David to court, to the malice and contrivance of Samuel and the priests. And with the same justice is it said, that Samuel gave to David the spirit of the Lord which he took from Saul, the scripture ascribes this to the spirit itself.

Pa. 10. It is hardly worth while to observe, that the Scripture is not here confused, and that if lay skill, he should have said in fidel skill, is not able to reconcile it, it is because they have a mind not to do justice to, but to condemn the book. The war with the Philistines had been mentioned some chapters before; but the history had been interrupted, to give an account of some other incidental necessary matters; a case unavoidable in every history. There is no difficulty in conceiving that David might have cured Saul; might have been wanted as the best shepherd by his father, and allowed to go home when three of his brothers were left in the King's army, all these to appearance better men.

men for the war than the younger David, so it is said, 1 Sam. xvii. 15.

Pa. 12. It was no rashness in David to fight Goliath, he was inspired to do it by the spirit of God who came upon him at his anointing, that God to whom no other being can make any resistance; and confident of his help, he undertook and succeeded in this attempt which no other man in Israel but himself dared to undertake. See Chap. 17, Ver. 37, & 45, & 46. The great piety and courage of this attempt are yet totally passed over by this writer without any remark: No token of candour this.

Pa. 13. There is nothing in it either impossible or improbable, that David who was but a musician, and only at times, and when he was wanted admitted into the King's presence, might be forgotten amongst the multitude of people, and the bustle that always attend a court. Saul's madness might also have contributed to this, and David's appointment of armour-bearer, might have been intended as a place of honour and not of service to him. These things are trifling, and no sufficient foundation for condemning the Scriptures to any person not deeply prejudiced against them.

Pa. 14. It is wonderful that any person could think the song of the women in attributing the greater honour to David, should give just cause of jealousy to Saul, and yet this writer doth it. David did in reality deserve this honour, for it was his victory over the giant that gave success to the Israelites. The man must believe against all reason, who imputes it to Samuel and the priests, that they improved this occurrence to hurt Saul. No proof hath been offered for this supposition; the very reverse of it hath been proved. It was most abominable injustice and cruelty in Saul to endeavour

to kill David upon this account, nor is it less inexcusable in this writer to conclude, that because Saul did attempt it, he therefore saw enough to alarm him; at this rate every murdered person is criminal, every murderer virtuous. The King might have betrayed his own council of intending to destroy David by the Philistines, or if he did not, the spirit that endited the Scriptures could tell his heart. If David believed, and it is plain from his whole proceedings that he did believe, he was not to be king till Saul was dead, or fell in battle, he had sufficient reason for fearing to be husband to the king's daughter, and needed not in this to act a part.

Pa. 16. The foreskins might have been required to put it out of doubt they were enemies slain by David. The ridicule upon this is very ingenious but nothing to the purpose.

Pa. 17. Jonathan convinces Saul that David was entirely innocent, and the King swears that he shall not be slain. But the oath is no sooner made than it is broken, and yet here is no reflection thrown upon Saul for his perjury, nay, it is made but a farther accusation of David, Saul saw more reason to be jealous of him. But this author would do well to consider, that the more unjust the malice, the more outrageous and implacable it ever grows. But tho' this writer could not tell us the cause of the King's hatred, the scripture hath done it; Chap. 18. 28, 29. *And Saul saw and knew that the Lord was with David, and he was yet the more afraid of David, and became his enemy continually.* And Chap. 19, and 8th Verse, *And there was war again, and David went out and fought with the Philistines and slew them with a great slaughter, and the evil Spirit was upon Saul, and and he sought to smite David unto the wall with his javelin.* So that we here find the King not only guilty

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guilty of ingratitude to David, but of perjury and impiety to God, of seeking to slay him because God was with him.

Pa. 18, 19. To the ridicule thrown upon prophets and prophesying, it may be sufficient to reply, that the supreme Being can move and govern his creatures as he pleases, and there was reason for his interfering here, namely, to save a most innocent and worthy man, who was afterwards to be of the greatest use to religion, from being destroyed by a most unjust persecution. Tho' some men are fools or knaves, all are not so. The spirit of God came upon the antient prophets, tho' not upon our modern quakers. The singing hymns to God was called prophesying, this was probably the case here. The author's ridicule here and in other places, shews what he thinks of revelation.

Pa. 20. Jonathan was not seduced from his allegiance or duty to his father. David had done nothing to deserve death, and it was but justice in Jonathan to save him. Saul's murderous intention against him was wicked, if any thing even was so, and yet this writer vindicates him in it. He saw that God was with David, that he was likely to get the crown by this means from his family, probably he had by this time heard of his being anointed for it, and for this reason he intended to kill him. He himself had been made King by God, all the governors of the Jews from Moses to himself had been promoted by the same appointment, he had been told by Samuel, 1 Sam. 15, 28. that the crown should be taken from him and given to another, by that God who raised himself from obscurity, and because he believed David to be this person he would kill him. This is the true Sense of the words of Saul which this writer quotes, and yet he adds that this shews Saul's antipathy to David not to have been the causeless inveteracy of a dis-

ordered mind. Is malice, is open rebellion and fighting against God no crime, no disorder of the mind? Till they are so, Saul will be most criminal, and doubtless it was from hence that he came to be such an enemy to the priests of God.

Pa. 21, 22. Had the sword of Goliath been consecrated, the necessity of the thing would vindicate David's taking it away, but we know not that it was. If David took it for self defence, and the whole of his behaviour shews that he did, there was no harm in it. This writer produces no cause for believing this to be a declaration of war against his father-in-law, or that he meant to enter into an alliance with Achish against the Hebrews. He might have required only protection with him, and from a generous enemy would have found it; but it was not so here.

Pa. 23. David was forced to return into Judea, but that he meant from this time to dispute the throne with, or to raise a rebellion against Saul is not only without, but contrary to all proof. He might have gathered together the men that came to him for his own defence, and it was so; he neither attempted nor made any insurrection; but continued quiet where he was, tho' in a desolate and barren wilderness. That the men had been before a dissolute crew, reflects the highest honour upon the virtue of David, who made them so harmless, so good, whilst they were with him. These two last paragraphs shew this writer not to be clear from that credulity or easiness of belief which he is wont to object to the christian defenders, and the same may be said of what immediately follows; infidel credulity exceeds even that of the papists.

Pa. 24. Gad the prophet did advise David to go into Judah, the reason not told; but the evil intention here put upon this action wholly the author's.

thor's. David shewed a mind entirely everse from it. Hiding a man's self from a King that would most unjustly kill him, is no insurrection, and this is all that David did. The slaughter of 85 innocent priests and their whole families, men, women and children, and even their cattle, one of the most horrible actions that ever was committed, is here so dexterously thrown off, that not Saul, but the nation is made faulty in it. The priests pleaded innocence, and certainly had it. Saul's purpose to kill David required secrecy. Jonathan his son did not know, could not believe it; and Saul thought his purpose so well concealed that he expected David would have come to his table, where he intended to kill him, and was extremely disappointed that he did not. As soon as Jonathan finds it true he sends David away, and in his flight he comes to the priests. These also knew not, could not know any evil in David that deserved death; and yet because they treated him with no more than common respect and humanity, the whole town of them is thus miserably butchered. A horrid action, if ever there were one. That they had any intention to dethrone Saul, a fiction of this author's; the barbarity asserted to this nation a fiction also; such was only used to the wicked Canaanites, who were to be extirpated, or in some cases of the highest provocation. But the strangest inference of all is, to make the wickedness and cruelty of a tyrant a sufficient reason for condemning the morals of those that were butchered by him. At this rate, Tracea Petus will be a villain, and Nero a virtuous man who killed him; and yet Tacitus tells us he was put to death for his virtue; and so it may also be said of Christ, his apostles and their murderers. We have seen that it was not a pique or the ambition of the priests that caused the rejection of Saul, but the will of the supreme governor both of heaven and earth.

Pa. 27. David delivered Keilah from the Philistines, and deserved a protection from it. It is no rebellion to defend an innocent subject against the murderous intention of his wicked king. Had David been minded to make himself master of any fortresses in Judea it is impossible but he must have been able to effect it in some of them; but nothing like this was ever attempted by him. To clear up David's character once for all, it is proper to observe, That the Divine Being hath an unquestionable right to dispose of the government of all his creatures, according to his own good pleasure; that this was more particularly so with regard to the Jews who were his own people, and had from their foundation been ruled by him in this manner; and that he had elected David as he had before elected Saul. But this election gave David no right to seize the crown immediately; he was to wait till God's providence should give it to him, and his whole behaviour shews that he thought in this manner.

It was no treason against, no undutifulness to his father for Jonathan to resort to comfort and to covenant with David, and not to destroy him whom God had appointed to be king, but was full of most commendable piety and resignation. It is plain from his speech to David that his designation to the throne was at that time well known and certainly believed by him, and doubtless was known by others also. Chap. 23. 17. *The words of Jonathan are, fear not, the hand of Saul my father shall not find thee, and thou shalt be king over Israel, and I shall be next unto thee, and that my father knoweth.* So that if Jonathan was to be believed, Saul was, and knew that he was a fighter against God.

Pa. 28. That David did upon farther persecution and distress afterwards repair to the Philistines, gives no just reason for supposing that he now called them

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them in. Such constant ill turns given to all the actions of David, always without, and often against all reason, will hurt the author's character much more than that of David, with every impartial person.

Pa. 29, 30, 31. The reason of David's sparing Saul's life in the cave are all most manifestly unjust. If he killed the king he might have escaped by many ways too tedious to mention. One I will mention, the cave might have had many months, and had he not known this, it is not to be conceived that he would have ventured to talk with Saul as he did, he might then have escaped, tho' Saul's men had continued the prosecution; but he had good reason to believe that they would not. Jonathan must then have had the command over them, and if he regarded either his love or his oath, he must have spared David; and besides, David's designation to the throne was now so publickly known, that he might hope a great part of the people would have come over to him. Here were then most reasonable hopes of security; but if he spared the King's life he certainly left himself subject to all the danger that the most implacable malice and the highest power could subject him to; and yet, when this enemy was put into his hands, his piety made him spare him. That David was in arms, gives not the least indication of an intended rebellion; he was long so; but never used them to any such purpose.

Pa. 32. We here meet with some reflections upon the character of Saul, which in other places he endeavours to exalt, this at first surprised me, as I suppose it will do the reader; but a little more recollection cleared up the matter to me. Saul here makes a candid confession of David's virtue and his own wickedness, a confession that shews beyond doubt that every one of this writer's charges are calumnies against David. 1 Sam. 24. 16, 17, &c. *And it came to pass that when David had made an*
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end of speaking, that Saul said, is this thy voice, my son David? and Saul lift up his voice and wept. And he said to David, thou art more righteous than I: for thou hast rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil. Is this indeed the language of an injured king to his traitorous and rebellious subject. But to go on, and thou hast shewed this day, how that thou hast dealt well with me; for as much as when the Lord delivered me into thine hand, thou killedst me not, wherefore the Lord reward thee good, for that thou hast done unto me this day. And now behold, I know well that thou shalt surely be king, and that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in thy Hand; swear therefore unto me by the Lord. This it is that draws from this gentleman an acknowledgment that Saul must have been greatly fatigued or strangely over seen; but tho' he cannot account for this proceeding, every impartial person can; he can see in this some remaining goodness of heart, which makes the man own the truth, whilst under the immediate influence of such kindness from a man he had so long and so injuriously treated, tho' as soon as the impression is off, he again returns to his former bad temper and unjust persecution of his son in law. Upon the whole of this matter then, Saul in his wits and under the power of reason and religion, confesses the wickedness of Saul out of his wits and when under the influence of an evil spirit, and the innocence and virtue of David whom he so horridly persecuted whilst in the wrong and melancholy way.

Pa. 33, 34, 35, 36. This writer makes himself very merry with the whole affair of David and Nabal and Abigail, but a regard to the truth requires me to be more serious. David had done more than the not injuring Nabal, tho' his generosity mentions not this in his message. Nabal's servants acknowledge

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ledge it, chap. 25. 16. *They were a wall unto us both by night and by day*; for this he deserved some return, and sent to beg for what refreshment Nabal could spare him, in this time of high festivity and plenty, not to levy any contribution. But the answer given was the most brutish and abusive that could be, charging David to be a vile runaway from his master. This raised David's passion, and a dreadful resolution was formed upon it; but the wise and timely application of Abigail appeased his wrath; and then, with a true sense of religion, he blesses God and her for saving him from such a wicked action. In this affair we have the warmth of a great, but the goodness of a religious man. It is to be added in defence of David, that as a successor to the throne appointed by God, he had a right to demand a maintenance, tho' he only begged some little relief in his distress, a distress altogether brought upon him by this very appointment. The Scripture makes it impossible that Nabal's death should be brought upon him by jealousy; for Ver. 27 and 28. He knows not nor is capable of knowing any thing till the next morning, and as soon as he is informed of it, his heart dies in him; and in ten days after the Lord slays him. This is the scripture account; as to his merriment about captain David and the captain's lady, and the causeless suspicions thrown upon both, he shall enjoy them in quiet for me.

Pa. 36, 37, 38. We now come to a second instance of David's sparing Saul's life when altogether in his power, and what is to be done with this! why, if it be allowed to be a second, it will entirely vindicate and do honour to David's character, and therefore it must be denied. But one need but look into the history to be convinced that this is indeed a second, and not the first time; that David might have killed when yet he saved the

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the life of Saul. It would take up too much time to give all the reasons, I shall just mention some of them. The Scripture tells this a second time, with the story of Nabal interposed, with different circumstances, in the bringing out and in the conduct of Saul and of David also. In this, Saul is in his camp, in the trench, lying asleep, and all his men asleep about him, and at midnight, and David only and Abishai there, who voluntarily quit their own hiding place to go to Saul; in the former, it is day time, Saul is alone and not one of his men with him, in a cave, and all David's men about him, hid in the sides. In the one he cuts off the skirt of his garment, lets him go of himself out of the cave, and speaks to him from the mouth of it; in the other, he touches him not, but takes away his spear and cruse of water, gets him away to a great distance, and calls out to Abner from the top of a distant mountain. These things put it beyond doubt, that these actions are not the same. The reasons given by this writer have not the least weight in them. That he pursues him in both places with the same number of men, when these certainly were his standing guard; 1 Sam. 13, 2. The nearness of the place, but a sameness and not the nearness of place is here requisite, and yet this author doth not venture to assert it; so manifestly different are they; that David comes upon him in much the same manner in both, these signify nothing. Many actions have these and many more likenesses, and yet are unquestionably different. That David mentions not the first deliverance to Saul, nor Saul that to him, may be accounted for by the generosity of the one, and the shame and self-condemnation of the other. That the sacred historian intended to blacken the character of the one and whiten that of the other, is an assertion that none but an infidel can make, that no christian can believe. Without recurring

recurring to inspiration, no history ever gave such marks of impartiality as the Bible hath done. It was wrote to give us an account of the peculiar people of God, and wrote by themselves; and yet, the greatest part of the book is taken up with a detail of their monstrous faults and punishments; and the same thing is also done to the characters of the most favourite men in it. And here again Saul acknowledges the innocence of David, and his own fault and folly; but this with considerable abatements, as being by this time more hardned in sin.

After this insult upon the Scripture one should hardly wonder at any thing this gentleman shall do, and yet, it cannot but appear strange that he should make his own perversion of the plain text, a cause of abusing commentators, connectors and harmonizers, but yet the thing is done by him.

Pa. 39, 40. I look upon David's going over to the Philistines as very imprudent, as carrying with it a sinful distrust of God; and had not his providence interposed he might have been undone by it. His condition however was truly pityable, he would raise no insurrection against, would not kill his king; and no safety appeared possible to him whilst he remained in his dominions. All his retreats and hiding places must, by the long persecution of Saul, have been now discovered; and so great was the malice and cruelty of the man, that no obligations of oaths or kindness could restrain him from attempting his life. This drove him, as he expresses it, from the heritage of the Lord. And here his difficulties are so encreased upon him, that he is drawn into some actions that are not good, tho' into none of these very bad ones that this writer would fix upon him. This gentleman would have here had him turn to quiet and husbandry. But suppose he would, by this means, have neglected the safety and welfare of the people he was after to govern, he was now bound to protect; and suppose

pose that he had a right to invade and destroy the people he hurt, would this action have been commendable? No it would not. It would have deserved and we may be sure that it would have met with much blame from him. The Scripture tells, that it was the Geshurites, and the Gezrites, and the Amalekites that David invaded, and that these were of the old inhabitants of the land, 1 Sam. 27, and with these therefore the Jews could make no peace, they were to extirpate them if they could, and be at continual war with them. And one nation of these at least, the Amalekites, and therefore we may judge the same of all the rest, were also at war with the Philistines. For when David came upon them, he found them rejoicing for the great spoil they had made, out of the land of the Philistines, and out of the land of Judah, 1 Sam. 89, 16. But then it will be asked, why should David be afraid of their telling on him. The answer is, that David would have Achish believe that it was against his own countrymen that he made these excursions, to whom therefore it would be impossible for him ever to return. And this effect it had upon him, tho' not upon the other Philistine lords. Besides, it would have been most dangerous to him, whilst in their country, for them to know, that instead of hurting, he was hereby doing a most material service to his own nation; protecting them and destroying their enemies. This will account for the whole of David's behaviour, and vindicate him in every thing but that of lying to Achish; a fault that he cannot be cleared of.

It is impossible that a man of David's piety and regard for the true religion, should have joined with Idolaters to destroy his own and God's people. Some other intention he must have had, and we can see two ways that he might have accomplished it, and with the greatest innocence. He might have designed

designed to mediate a peace between them, or if this could not have been brought to pass, to abandon the Philistines, and to join neither party, as soon as it would be safe for him to do so. As to his boast to Achish, Thou shalt see what thy servant can do, it is plainly spoken with a subterfuge, and left him at liberty to act as he should see best. And here again he must be given up for the lie. These things, it is true, do no honour to David's character, and we will allow him to be a bad man, when any other is found without such little faults, in the like temptations and dangers.

Pa. 43, 44. We know not what might have been done to David's people, if they had not been recovered by him. His own safety and the love of his country must have made him to drive on the pursuit, that he might preserve himself, and that from another return of this kind. Great is the partiality indeed that can blame him for this action;

Pa. 45. David's presents might have been designed as a recompence for favours received; if to keep up an interest, the thing was right; he was to be their king when Saul was dead.

Pa. 46. The character of Saul is here greatly misrepresented; his disobedience to God, his breach of his oath to Jonathan and David, his murder of the priests and all their families, his persecution of David, his slaughter of the Gibeonites, his recourse to the witch of Endor, all these shew him to have been a very bad man. And, that God did at last, totally withdraw himself from him, puts it beyond doubt, to every believer, that he was so. If this writer be not one of this number, his God knows what the reason of it is, and to him we must refer him. Possibly some people may be filled with such malice against God as designedly to oppose him, this we know is actually the case with the Devils, and may be with some of those men, who are

most governed by them. This appears, from what hath been said, also to be the case of Saul ; but we need not this supposition to clear up the matter with regard to Saul's men. Our belief ever must depend upon our judgment ; and our judgment is so influenced by our particular constitutions, prejudices, passions, interests, that it is too often entirely governed by them ; men will believe or disbelieve against almost the clearest conviction. No wonder then that Saul was served by so many, when he was a king and had such power of gratification to make his servants believe as he pleased. That Saul was designed by Samuel, only to be his deputy, a meer fiction ; that this prophet hated him, or the priests endeavoured to dethrone him, a fiction also. The history contains nothing like it, every thing against it : Saul's resort to the ghost of Samuel when in the last extremity shews that he to the last took him for his friend.

Pa. 29. The regal character of David.

The election of the divine Being is the best title that any king possibly can have, and David had this. The action of an established prophet, and Samuel was such, in the name of the Lord, must be of sufficient authority to a Jew, or he never had any either for government or religion. There had been no hereditary government, heretofore, among the Jews, Saul's sons had not been appointed as his successors ; nay, another person had been fixed upon for this office, and therefore, David who was this man had a most unquestionable right to it ; and Ishbosheth was an usurper, an usurper in the worst sense. David's opinion was, and he shewed it in the most remarkable instances, that it was unlawful to kill the Lord's anointed ; and therefore, he did, according to this opinion, most justly put the lying Amalekite to death. Had he not done so, he would have furnished this writer with a fine sting at him,

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for pretending in this a regard for religion, whilst it was his interest, for casting it off, when it was not. The author here supposes it known that Saul was rejected of God, and David the pretender, he should have said the real heir to the throne; in the top of the 47 page he is of a different opinion, and makes them mad who think so. It is not so certain that David would have lent his hand to destroy Saul, there is do doubt, from his behaviour in other places, that he would not. He might still have had some love for Saul, or if he had not, his grief for the death of his beloved Jonathan, and the slaughter of his own and God's people, must have affected him with the deepest sorrow. But how is it that this author's superior genius, for such he hath indeed, which cannot but relish a beautiful poem, should yet, in this place, pass over without notice, the finest ode that ever the world saw?

Pa. 49. David claimed in right of God's appointment and unction by Samuel, and had no other. The second anointing proves nothing against this, nor the wars he was afterwards engaged in, to obtain the crown of Israel. When men's interest and passions have no power to swerve from their duty, the opposition which David met with will be an argument against his right; till then, it will not. When Saul began at first to persecute David, the motive he makes use of to engage, his men in this unrighteous attempt is, *1 Sam. 22, 7. Hear now, ye Benjamites, will the son of Jesse give every one of you fields, and vineyards, and make you all captains of thousands, and captains of Hundreds?* and this motive had it's effect; they all joined him heartily in the persecution; and what should hinder it from producing the same consequences now! Extraordinary means are never made use of by the divine Being, when ordinary ones will do.

When Abner turned to David, he shewed that it was a matter well known that David was to be king after Saul; and more than this that the Philistines were to be conquered by him. 2 Sam. 3. 9, 10, thus he speaks to Ishbosheth, *so do God unto Abner and more also, except as the Lord hath sworn to David, so do I to him; to translate to the kingdom from the house of Saul, and to set up the throne of David over Israel; and verse 18, thus to all Israel, by the hand of my servant David, will I save my people Israel out of the hand of the Philistines, and out of the hand of all their enemies.* An abundant confirmation this of David's title, and of the injustice of all this writer's former arguments. The amorous disposition of David must be acknowledged; but a plurality of wives was not then prohibited.

P. 52. Abner was an impious traitor, his own words confess it, whilst he assisted Ishbosheth, an honest and religious man, when he engaged in David's cause. Joab's murder of Abner was most abominable, that this wretch was a servant worthy of his master hath not yet been, will not ever be proved.

Pa. 53, 54. Abner was not false but wickedly kind to Ishbosheth; without recurring to politicks, no men could deserve death better than those two villains, who murdered this man. Had David forbore to inflict it, what an outcry should we have made against David, and deservedly too, who stuck at no villanies to obtain the crown. The reflection, that David was worse than these, for he was the fomentor of the mischief, would have been just if he was the usurper; but the case is directly the reverse. David had the best right possible, and he would have been disobedient to the highest of all authorities if he had not endeavoured to make it good.

Pa. 55, 56, 57. It was the Divine Being himself, and Samuel only the subordinate agent, that inspired David with the desire of reigning, and fitted him for it too. As soon as he was anointed the spirit of God came upon him. He had a right to take Jerusalem, if he could conquer it; it was part of the land given by the Creator of the world to the Israelites, and from whose gift all creatures derive their entire property. David made the Philistines indeed feel his strokes, but is he to be blamed for conquering his, and his nation's most powerful enemies?

Pa. 58, 59. The carriage prescribed for the Ark was the Levite's shoulders. David was ignorant and faulty in putting it into a cart; Uzzah more criminal, for thinking God needed his assistance, and presuming to touch it, which was forbidden. A severity of this kind was certainly most necessary, to beget a proper reverence to the divine command and presence. If the man's intention was really good, a reward would be given him in the next life, where it is of infinitely greater, where it only is of value. The scripture expressly tells us, that God struck Uzzah, that David saw, and was displeased at it, who if done by any others would have avenged it; and yet this author in a note, puts a quere, whether the Lord did not here smite by the hands of the priests; a wonderful instance this of the man's fairness, who would have us believe his conjecture in direct opposition to Holy Writ. If he doth not know that multitudes of others did before this perish for their irreverence to the Ark, where there were no priests with it, he knows nothing of the Scripture.

Decency was most strictly prescribed to the Jews in the worship of God, David we may be sure would take care of this, and if the linen Ephod which he wore was not sufficient for the purpose,

would put on some other clothes. That he was stripped of his robes and upper garments, was sufficient to denominate him naked. The punishment inflicted upon Michal plainly from God, the divine approbation of David in this instance, a demonstration that decency had been here preserved. The author witty but very profane in his jest. Many women who have not borne children for a long time are not yet constitutionally barren, for they have had children afterwards, the evil intention ascribed, Pa. 60. to the sacred historian must be proved, and not taken for granted as often as this author pleases. A humiliation of itself to God, is the highest virtue in the highest of creatures, it is more especially so in sinful man. A readiness to shew this, the praise of David; the want of it the fault of Michal. When God condemns, the heart is certainly wrong; the pride of the king's daughter was probably her fault. 2 Sam. 5. 17. No sooner is David king, than the Philistines come and invade him, he had then right to war upon them. This was also the case with Saul, 1 Sam. 14. 47. He had for enemies, Moab, Ammon, Edom, the king of Zobah and the Philistines; and as no peace had since been made with these people, David was necessitated to make war with them.

Pa. 61. The hatred of Moab to the Jews was always extreme, and doubtless their treatment of them equally cruel. We are told of no such severities exercised by David, upon the Philistines, Edomites, Syrians, these therefore, must have given him great provocation, and if he punished them, ought he not indeed to do it by rule, and with choice? Would this writer have had him done it indiscriminately? Surely this would be wrong. This Gentleman tells us that David smote the
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the Philistines not even sparing Gath where he had been protected; would not one judge from hence that he had utterly destroyed it, and yet all that the Scripture which he himself quotes saith is, 1 Chron. 18. 1. David smote the Philistines and subdued them, and took Gath and her towns out of the hands of the Philistines. Would he indeed have him leave it in the enemy's hands? But we know that he did spare it, and Achish the king of it; for 1 Kings 2. 29. we find a king of this name reigning in it, tho' in subjection to the Jews. We have here seen abundant reason for these wars; and it is contrary to all impartiality, to plain fact, to ascribe them to the blood thirstiness and rapaciousness of David, and to the setting on of the priests for the plunder they were to share. All was dedicated to the temple, nothing of profit accrued to them. The conquered, in a just war, have no reason to abuse their conqueror; he may deserve a most glorious, tho' they give him the worst of characters.

Pa. 62. This writer ascribes but an indifferent intention to David, in calling Mephibosheth to court, the Scripture, the best one, a gratitude to his father. David's expression is, that I may shew the kindness of God unto him, that is the greatest possible, and suitably to this, he restores to him all the land of Saul his father, and makes him eat bread continually at his own table. 2 Sam. 9. 3, 7. Actions these that could not proceed from jealousy; for then the lower he kept him the better.

Pa. 63. The Scripture gives up David as to the matter of Uriah, every christian must do the same.

Pa. 66. David took care not to fall out farther with his best friend, and this friend was the God of the Priests, and of himself. Were not religion the ruling motive with the prophet, he had every other

other reason to deter him from meddling in this affair. The impartiality of the Scripture manifest, by giving so full an account of this vile transaction. Had David deserved condemnation in other instances, he would have found it as well as in this. The best of men are sinners, David was long and deeply sunk in this crime; yet was not his heart bad; it was good at all other times, and this was but a single affair, in a whole, long and most active life. David's Psalms, and these publicly sung in the temple service, shew a humiliation and repentance for this sin, equal to the heinousness of it.

Pa. 67. The treatment of the Ammonites was very severe, but then we may justly suppose the provocation to be of the most heinous nature. That of the embassadors was most insulting. They had no reason to take them for spies, but what every embassador must be subject to. As David no where else shewed such cruelty, he must have some particular reason for it here; and the particular punishments seem to shew that he had; that they had before treated the Jews, in remembrance of, and as an insult upon their slavery in Egypt, with the punishments afterwards inflicted upon themselves. This, which is our only conjecture, may certainly be allowed by him, whose whole book is entirely made up of those that are much worse founded; and a most substantial reason shall be produced hereafter.

Pa. 69. The wickedness of Absalom and Amnon, is no reflection upon David, only that he did not sufficiently punish either of them.

Pa. 71. The author is a little mistaken, in making a profession of piety the means by which Absalom cajoled and deceived the people, it was a pretence to justice and affability. 2 Sam. 15. 3, 4, 5. *And Absalom said there is no man de-*
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putted of the king to bear thee; O that I were judge in the land, then every man that had any suit might come unto me; and I would do him justice; and when any man came to do him obeysance, be put forib his band and took him and kissed him. This was the cloak, but the word piety would give a handle to hint at the cheats of religion, and this was an advantage not to be passed over.

If the priests had any conscience at all, they must have held their allegiance to David against the most wicked rebel, his unnatural son, and served him as much as they were able. Had they done otherwise, they would have given a fine handle to this their good friend to tell them of it, who makes it such a piece of policy in David, to suit men with proper employments when he made them his spies. But it must be observed, that these men did no more than send intelligence to David, which every honest or religious man, was in such a case obliged to do, and betrayed not any secrets committed in confidence to them. I think it may even be doubted, whether Hushai's behaviour was bad, who did this thing; but if it was, he was none of the priests.

Pa. 73, 74. Shimei's accusation of David was false in every instance, he had not at this time killed any of the family of Saul, and to make his malicious and false aspersions a sufficient conviction, is injustice, if any thing can be so. And here again is the Scripture condemned as a most partial and false history, as prudently concealing things from these distant ages. The reason given for sparing Shimei's life, is, in Scripture represented as a dutiful resignation to divine providence; but by this writer as a piece of policy. What, was it not policy to cut off at least one enemy in a time

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time of open rebellion, an enemy too, whose spite was so great, that he regarded not his own life to throw but a contumely upon David, and so followed him a great way, cursing him, and throwing stones and dust !

Pa. 77, 78. David's fondness for this rebel son was very blameable ; and yet, what father of any sense of religion, could see his child perish in such a way, without being concerned for him.

Pa. 80. That David had no more scruples than his general, Joab, hath not yet, will not be hereafter proved. Upon the murder of Abner, David declared that the sons of Zeruiah were too powerful for him, and the same reason we may be sure remained all his life, because other wise he would have himself done that justice upon him which he charged Solomon afterwards to execute. And here David is blamed by him for not punishing Joab, tho' afterwards he be most severely condemned for ordering it to be done.

Pa. 81. The offence of Shemei was capital by the Jewish law, and, if David had not engaged to pass it over, he must have died for it. If Mephibosheth really lost by the grant, this might have been made up to him some other way.

Pa. 82, 83. David is charged with a most black piece of ingratitude and perfidy ; let us examine it then. The Scripture gives this account of the matter. 2 Sam. 21. Chap. *There was a famine three years, year after year. And David enquired of the Lord, and the Lord answered it is for Saul and his bloody house, because he slew the Gibeonites and the king called the Gibeonites, and said unto them, what shall I do for you, and wherewith shall I make the attonement, that ye may bless the inheritance of the Lord.* Now what would any impartial person collect from this, but that God had told David,

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David, both the reason of, and the way to remove the famine, and this was by applying to the Gibeonites and doing for them whatsoever they should desire; and accordingly, David delivers to them seven sons of Saul, to be put to death for the wickedness of their father. For, if this was not the case, where was the sense of his going to the Gibeonites at all, or asking of them to bless the inheritance of the Lord? Or how comes the famine to be removed, as we are plainly to conclude that it was? Had this action been as this author represents it, such a horrid crime must have, but occasioned more mischief to the Jews. This may seem very strange to us; but we are to consider that this was the work of God, whose ways never can be unjust, tho' often above our comprehension; that he hath a right to take away the life of any one he pleases; that when he commands the death of any man, or number of men, he must be obeyed in it, and that he had given these orders here as was common to him, as King and God, of the Jews. That tho' the reasons of his acting cannot always be discovered by us, yet in this we may make a conjecture of one of them, that it was to shew the heinous and sinful nature of a breach of publick faith, at a time when the great and irresistible power of the Jews might lay them under a powerful temptation to this vice. And that for the poor sufferers themselves, their Creator who ordered, might make this punishment the greatest blessing possible to them.

It were an easy matter to give a full reply to every thing here advanced by this author against the Scriptures; but this I pass over as undeserving of notice and confine myself to vindicate the character of David alone.

That David's mind should now fall a prey to suspicion is extremely improbable, a rebellion defeated,

seated, doth but strengthen the throne of the possessor, and such was now the case of David. It is not worth while to go to a long computation; but it must have been by this time more than 30 years since Saul's death, and this was a time sufficient to lessen or totally destroy all the interest of his family. But there is a much surer reason to be given; David knew, and told, and all the Jews knew also, that God had promised even with an oath, to establish him and his family upon the throne of Judah; this promise, David had an entire confidence in, and therefore no fear of this kind had invaded his mind. But the reader is to observe, that he must give up the whole of his religion, if he be a Jew, or, a christian, to believe this author's representation just; because it cannot be so, unless what the Scripture sayeth to proceed from the Lord, be a false and villainous contrivance of a wicked king and a profligate priest. Had David sworn, without any reserve to Saul, the commandment of God to execute those whom his oath bound him to preserve, must have made him act contrary to his oath; because here an authority interposed that can never be disobeyed; and which alone can give obligation to the oath. But the oath was immediately vacated by Saul. David could not have sworn to him but upon the promise of ceasing his attempts to kill him; but this promise, Saul immediately after broke. That there was not so much policy in this proceeding as he would have us think, is plain from hence; that Mephibosheth and his son were preserved; and yet, they must have had the best title to the crown of any of Saul's family. A conscience therefore of such convenient flexibility, as this writer ascribes to David by the vile verses quoted from Oedipus, is against all justice.

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God is often in Scripture said to do that which his providence only permits. Satan was the tempter here, and neither the motions of the holy spirit nor the temptations of that apostate are irresistible. David therefore was faulty in this, and if the king be faulty or foolish his people must ever suffer for it. But the people here deserved their suffering. 2 Sam. 24. 1. *The text tells us, that the anger of the Lord was again kindled against Israel.* But wherefore was it kindled? doubtless because of their wickedness? he ever will punish a wicked people; and here we have those who fell by the plague, chosen out by him who knows all men, and never can nor will do wrong to any one. There is therefore no reason to fear that the intelligent reader shall for this condemn the Scripture, for he cannot do it without the most manifest partiality.

Pa. 88. Abishag the young woman brought to David was not only to cherish but to attend on and take care of him, and an agreeable pleasing person must certainly render her the more acceptable in this office.

This writer's whole account of Solomon's succeeding David in the throne is contrary to the Scripture. The account there given is, 1 Chron. 22. 8, 9, 10. David, because a shedder of much blood, was not to build the temple; but, verse 9. *Behold a son shall be born unto thee, who shall be a man of rest, for his name shall be Solomon; and I will give peace and quietness unto Israel in his days. He shall build an house for my name, and he shall be my son, and I will be his father, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom over Israel for ever.* Here then the divine designation of Solomon, to succeed David and to fix the throne of Israel to his family, is plainly pointed out, and this even before he was born; so plainly,

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that we find David had sworn unto Bathsheba that it should be so, 1 Kings 1. 17, 30. It was therefore no imprudence in Adonijah to make this attempt before David's death; for had he waited till this event happened, he must then have found Solomon upon the throne; a most improper time for it, certainly. We might be sure, whenever a prophet was introduced, he would be either condemned or thrown into contempt, and both are attempted here. But a plain detail of the facts will clear Nathan of both, and do honour to his character. It was the business of Adonijah to gain over as many as he could, and to found them for this purpose, and it was done accordingly. 1 Kings 1. 7, 8. *And he conferred with Joab and Abiathar, and they helped Adonijah. But Zadok the priest, and Benaiab, and Natban and the mighty men that belonged to David, were not with them.* Nathan would not join him in his project, because he knew it to be wrong, to be contrary to the appointment of God, and the design and oath of David, verse 13, and therefore was he not called; and suitably to this, must every expression quoted by this writer be explained. The wherefore in the 11 verse refers to both, to Nathans being tried and refusing, and to their therefore leaving him out from their feast, whose presence must have hindered the effecting the thing they designed. Adonijah did not slight the priests here, he had founded the chief of them, and had Abiathar the high priest with him; but Zadok was proof against all his temptations as Nathan was. The loss therefore of a good dinner and its cheer, and the pique of the man, are both to be thrown out as nothing to the purpose; only that they served to throw contempt upon a prophet. David's sons were too much interested in the affair. Solomon had been declared the successor in prejudice to
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all their claims, and envy at him must have worked most power fully against him. The possibility of Nathan's corruption we have nothing to do with; that he was a prophet, the sole reason why it was made; but we are certain that he was not corrupted, by this writer's having nothing but a possibility to object against him.

Pa. 93. The plea here put into the gentlewoman's mouth is a most just one, that if David had his faults, so have others, and that his repentance was most exemplary. But that he and the lady shall part very good friends is not likely, is indeed impossible if she continues a christian. She can never be reconciled to the treatment which he gives to the Scriptures, whilst she hath any regard for this religion. That David lived such a life as this author hath described, hath been proved false in every particular, except that of Uriah. No need have we therefore of reconciling contradictions.

Pa. 95, 96. The Psalms are all inspired by God, and David only speaks in them as he was moved by the Holy Ghost; and the divine Being hath certainly a right to curse as well as to bless; that is, to make the prophet wish that great evil and punishment to great wickedness, which it so well deserves, and he will at the last inflict upon it. In the 68 Psal. we have an illustrious prophecy of the preaching and effect of the Gospel, and the opposition it should meet with; and the words quoted denounce the very heavy vengeance which God would and did inflict upon the opposers of it. And certainly with the greatest justice; because it is the greatest blessing that the world could receive; it assures every virtuous man of a pardon of sin, an endless life, and inconceivable happiness, and was and is the most fully proved. A consideration worthy of this gentleman and his

adherents, who are endeavouring by every means, means the most unfair and culpable, to destroy this religion, which if they should succeed in, they would by striking off all restraints from vice and incitements to virtue, render this earth but a hell of confusion and misery. In the 69 Psal. the case is much the same. David, speaking in his own person, describes, by the same inspiration, the unjust and cruel treatment of his son, the Messiah, and the exact fate that these his murderers should meet with, for this abominable wickedness; and by the divine direction wishes that so it may happen to them; and where is the crime, the cruelty, in this? That this writer chose to give us these passages in an old and bad version, when a better one is now used, or when the plain text lay before him, will do him no honour with the impartial reader.

Pa. 96. Few men were ever under more difficult temptations than David; yet his life was uniformly good; good, in every instance, except in that one which the Scripture condemns. It hath been fully proved to be so; and the slightest reflection will shew that this is a very extraordinary case. For, where actions are very distant and partiality will put the worst interpretation possible upon them, the greatest innocence cannot always be made clear against, will often be oppressed by it.

Pa. 97. The sling here pointed at commentators is such as might be expected. But they have no need to reconcile rapine and cruelty with morality and religion; David was guilty of neither of them. The most moderate acquaintance with the Hebrew will shew, that the imprecations of the 109 Psal. may all be translated in the future tense and then they will be but prophecies of what is to happen. This author grows very angry here,

here, and no wonder; for, by this easy explanation, his whole argument to prove the revengeful and bloody temper of David will be at once destroyed. But we need not this to vindicate his character. Wickedness deserves hatred and vengeance, and the greatest wickedness the highest degree of them; and this here mentioned, was of this kind. We know, from the same inspiration which indited this Psalm, that it was the crime of Judas in betraying his master, Acts 1. 20. and of the Jews, in killing him, that is here spoken of; and as this abominable wickedness must be most odious to God, so might he inspire the prophet with a proper, with his own hatred of it, and make him curse the perpetrators of it in the way that he hath done, and in the way that he did punish this sin. The Jews feel the effect of this prophecy even to this day. It is true, that the great parent of nature is all beneficent; but if this be carried to such a length by any man, as to infer from hence that he will not punish sin, I reply, that it might be, it will be hereafter proved, that this very attribute doth oblige him to do so; but omitting this, we have a sure experience that this notion is false, for the whole constitution of nature is, that wickedness shall make miserable, and when carried to such a pass, shall prove fatal to the man.

Pa. 98. If we have a mind to view the character of dying David in a just light, we must not consider him as a private person, but as the king of Israel. But when we have done this, we shall not find him culpable for his advice to Solomon to kill Joab. This profligate man had committed two horrid murders, for which, by their law he was to suffer death; the guilt of blood was by this law, to fall upon the judge and the

people who did not avenge it ; David was unable, through the great power of Joab, himself to do justice upon him, and therefore if he had any regard for himself, his son and family, and the people of God, he must, as he did, have directed his successor to kill him. This is the reason given both by David and Solomon ; 1 Kings 2. 5, 31, 32, 33. And therefore, this Action, which is so outrageously abused by this gentleman, proves to be but an instance of piety and justice in David. And very possibly, it was a conscious fear of this, that made this general embrace the party of Adonijah, which he could not but know was contrary to the designation of God, and the duty and intention of the King. And had not David, indeed, acted in this manner, he would, and deservedly too, have met with the heaviest accusation from this author, as a person that neither hated, nor punished any villainy that was of service, or was done by a friend to him.

And as to the case of Shemei, tho' it be not so plain, yet can it be sufficiently vindicated. Cursing the king was a capital offence by the Jewish law ; but David had sworn that he himself would not put him to death for it. If however, he found, that the sparing his life would do a publick mischief, it would be right in him, as soon as the obligation of the oath was over, which would be at his death, to direct his son to execute vengeance upon him. And the words of David do plainly imply so much, *thou therefore hold him not guiltless, for thou art a wise man and knowest what thou oughtest to do.* Some political reasons, therefore, there were, for this advice, which the wisdom of Solomon could not but approve of, and we can easily discern two of them, 1st, That it might be dangerous to government, to permit such an outrageous

rageous insult upon the person of the king to go unpunished ; and 2d, That Shemei himself was a pestilent fellow, whose life it was unsafe to spare. As to the first of these reasons, the rebellious temper of the Jewish Nation, which only was to be restrained by severity, would always make it a good one, and the present circumstances of that time might render it most peculiarly so. And as to the 2d reason, the extreme rancour of Shimeis heart, which hath been already noticed, and all the subsequent proceedings, prove also, that this is a just one. The punishment inflicted upon him by Solomon, was, a confinement to Jerusalem, with a denunciation, that he should die if ever he quitted it. But why such a restriction as this, except to take him away from that place and people where he might be able to do mischief? In this, there is a strong probability, and this probability is confirmed by Solomon's declaration, when condemning him to death, *that the throne of David should thereby be established*, and by the like declaration of the Scripture, upon it, *that the kingdom was established to Solomon.* 1 Kings 2. 45, 46. If then there were in this case, such necessities of government for putting Shimeis to death, and it is abundantly clear that there were, David was not only innocent, but virtuous, in his advice to Solomon, to kill him.

We may now see with what justice it is asserted, Pa. 100. That this direction was afterwards, as to Joab, fulfilled by the administrator of this pious testament in the basest manner ; and Pa. 101, that it was also executed upon Shimeis in a manner worthy the son of such a father. And here I will go so far in the vindication of Solomon as to observe, that Shemei thought himself happy in escaping with so slight

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a vengeance, as having his life put upon his staying in Jerusalem, by these words, verse 38. *The saying is good as my Lord the king hath said* ; and, that Solomon was no more unjust in executing him afterwards, than are our laws for condemning to death the transport who shall return before his time.

These things do sufficiently vindicate the character of David, in the advice he gave to Solomon to put Joab and Shimei to death, but could I have gone no farther in his defence, than to have said that this great height of christian perfection, the forgiveness of injuries, was not then plainly enjoined, I had saved his reputation from any considerable hurt. And here let me ask the reader, if he be acquainted with the history of Nero ! If he be at all so, it cannot but astonish him, notwithstanding all the glaring partiality of this author, to have David compared to him, and principally for his behaviour in these two last instances. What ! compared to this monster of a man who delighted in blood, cruelty, and the slaughter of his own innocent subjects, who was an enemy to all goodness, a destroyer of all good men ; and of whose wickedness it makes but a small part, that he murdered the true successor to the throne, his tutor, his wife, his mother, and himself fired and rejoiced in a conflagration, which consumed ten parts in fourteen, of his own capital city ?

And now to take a retrospect view of the foregoing narrative, the sum of the whole will appear as follows. A shepherd youth is chosen by the express order of God, and against the strongest inclination of the prophet, to be king over his own people, in the room of Saul, who had disobeyed and rejected the divine authority. But as this election was not to take place immediately,

diately, and Samuel knew Saul too well to imagine that he would spare the lives of any of these who were concerned in this matter, because executing the divine comand, this choice is ordered to be made by a private anointing. As soon as this is done, the spirit of the Lord defends upon David, to fit him for the office he was afterwards to fill; and Saul for his wickedness is at the same time abandoned by him and given up to the possession of an evil spirit. For the cure of this malady David is brought to court; and whether by the natural effect of his powerful musick, or the extraordinary assistance of God, he performs a cure upon him. At this time, the Israelites are invaded by an army of the Philistines, which they dared not to look in the face, and principally upon account of a champion of such a monstrous size that he was but a few inches short of twelve feet high; of a strength equal to his bulk, and covered with armour proportioned to it. When all other Jews were terrified and refused to fight this man, David boldly undertakes it. Inspired by God, and confiding in his irresistible assistance, he encounters this Giant, and with no other arms than a sling and a few stones, kills him, and the whole army is thereby defeated*. But because the women in their songs of victory ascribe more honour to David than to Saul, the king grows so envious of, so malicious against, him, that he twice endeavours himself to destroy him. Failing, however of success in this attempt he takes hold of his valour, to engage him in such desperate enterprises against the Philistines, as should be sure to make him to fall by their hands.

* The supposition of David's running away equally contrary to his acknowledged bravery, and the Scripture, which makes him assured of the victory.

hands. But this attempt also, only serving to exalt and establish his character, he sends messengers at first, and at last goes in person to make sure of killing him. By these attempts, is David forced to fly and conceal himself in the most rough, barren and unpeopled part of the country; where yet, when joyned by a set of men, many of whom were made desperate by distress or wickedness, he so reforms as to make them a blessing to every one that was concerned with him. And here, when hunted from mountain to mountain, and drove to the greatest extremity of distress and danger, by the most unmerited and cruel persecution; he would raise no insurrection against nor do any mischief to Saul; but, out of a religious principle, twice spares his life, when entirely in his power. Spares him, when he was hereby forced to fly from his own country, to the bitterest enemies of it and himself for protection; and when by destroying this man, he would at one blow have put an end to all danger and have exalted himself to the kingly power.

His friend Jonathan he loved and served in the only way he could serve him; by preserving and amply providing for his only posterity. He drew him into no breach of filial duty, no offence against his allegiance, and lamented his death when he was killed, and even that of Saul himself, with such passionate and beautiful strains of sublime poetry as the world hath never since produced their equal.

And now when forced away from his own country and in the power of it's enemies, he contrives to do his own people a most material service, by destroying several of their adjoining enemies, who were making continual inroads upon them. In sight from his country it is however very probable that he was guilty of a criminal distrust of the divine

divine providence, and here he fell into such dangers as might have been fatal to him, had not the interposition of God delivered him from them. We may be sure that he had some scheme or other to prevent his joyning against his king or country, but whatsoever it was, it took no effect, for the mistrust of the Philistines rendered it useless; and certain it is that he never did any injury to Saul or to the Jews.

Upon Saul's death he returns to his own people, and with the best title to govern them, that every man possessed, the appointment of the creator of the world and the king of the Jews. And, after a long war with the house of Saul, is delivered from all contest, by the death of the usurper Ishbosheth; a death which however he had no hand in, but hated and punished as the wickedness of the thing deserved. He is now king of Isreal, and in this capacity defended his people against, and made them masters of all their enemies, by the most glorious victories; and in the most just wars, was merciful to all these that deserved it, and only severe to two of these nations whose cruel treatment of his own and of God's people, must have drawn this retaliation upon them*. Moab and Ammon were always most bitter enemies to the Jews, and the latter of these so remarkably cruel,

* Wars before christianity were most horribly cruel; instances of this might be produced both from Greece, and Rome, the most civilized nations of the world; and the thing is so to this hour among these people, who are not christians. This might have been observed before, to the vindication of David, but was not judged necessary. Even in this instance, then, how beneficial is christianity? and what prodigious mischief would these gentlemen do to the world if they should destroy this religion!

cruel, that they would not even accept of a surrender from the people of Jabesh Gilead, and this without fighting, but upon the terms of trusting out all their right eyes. 1 Sam. 11. 2; and the particular punishment inflicted upon them seems plainly to refer to the like treatment by them first given to the people of Israel. In the matter of Uriah, he deserves to be, and he is therefore condemned, by the Scripture, and was most exemplarily punished for it; but this was his only fault of consequence in a most long, active and dangerous life; and in the Psalms, which were put into the mouths of all the people, and publickly sung in the temple service, he makes such open and penitential confession of this crime, as shews his repentance to have been sincere, if ever man's was so.

When he had quelled the rebellion of Absalom, he, for former ill behaviour in Joab, and now killing his son contrary to his orders, designs to remove him from and to give the chief command of the army to Amasa; but this former general kills the latter in a most treacherous manner and secures that high power to himself. After this, David, in obedience to that God, whose command makes the highest obligation, delivers seven of Saul's sons to be put to death by the Gibeonites, for a cruel breach of publick faith, committed by that cruel king against this innocent people, but at the same time takes care to preserve Mephibosheth and his son, who of all Saul's family must have had the best title to the crown. And when dying he is so mindful of the good of his family and people, as to wash off the guilt of innocent blood, by directing Joab to be put to death for two horrid murders committed by him; and Shimei also to be killed for the peace and welfare of his nation, whose crime deserved that vengeance as soon as it could be inflicted upon him. And, what must be most highly

highly to his honour, and is so to the highest of creatures, he claimed to have religion constantly in his heart, and hath the confirmation of that God who cannot be deceived, that it really was so with him.

These, Britons, are some of the out-lines of the life of a Jew, whom your Scripture commends as a man after God's own heart, but whom this writer, by every art of misrepresentation and calumny, endeavours to blacken. Whether he be serious in his pretensions to religion, and his exultations upon his presumed success, may be very much doubted; but you will judge of these matters by considering, that through his whole book he throws contempt and abuse upon the sacred text; frequently contradicts it, speaks of it's unfaithfulness in concealing the truth, and endeavouring to exalt the character of one, and blacken the character of the other man; condemns all those who endeavour to defend it, or to reconcile the difficulties of it, as men lost to all sense and candour; and even here, where he would seem to be in good humour, dignifies all those of our clergy who stand up for the Scriptures with the name of reverend inquisitors. And after all these flagrant attempts to abuse and destroy your religion, concludes his treatise with some of the most solemn expressions that are to be found in the new Testament. *Father forgive them, for they know not what they do, and, glory be to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will towards men;* as if he only were a friend, and all others were enemies to christianity. A proceeding this of such a nature that I shall not chuse to give a name to it.

The reader cannot have missed observing that our clergy are treated with great asperity by this gentleman, and it may be right to say something in their defence. Possibly, it may be that a hatred to their persons and office may also

breed a hatred to their religion. I ask therefore, have they manifested any desire to enslave the consciences of their people, betrayed any enmity to liberty and the freedom of enquiry, any bitterness against their adversaries, who heap such undeserved abuse upon them! any desire to have them persecuted? no they have not. This hatred of them, then, can only proceed from their being neither weak enough to be perverted by the trifling arguments of these gentlemen, nor villainous enough to give up that blessed religion which they know to be true, and they are bound to teach without any defence to the attacks of it's enemies; but have indeed vindicated it in such a manner as to baffle and shame all it's adversaries. But enough, perhaps it is too much to have said of such a matter.

Upon a reconsideration of my whole defence it appears manifest to me, that I have in every instance cleared the reputation of David, except in the case of Uriah and Bathsheba; and here I have an observation to make which must give additional force to all my reasonings, and put the character of David beyond doubt, to every christian. If in a history wrote for the promotion of morality and most eminent for it's regard to it, we should find a man severely condemned for a lesser, and yet not at all blamed for a seemingly much greater, wickedness, nay even declared to be faultless in it, would we not conclude that there must be some favourable circumstances in the latter case, which took away the malignity of it, tho' we were not able to discover them? undoubtedly, we would, and we ought to conclude in this manner; because the circumstances of an action must entirely form the nature of it; and till these are known, our judgment must be uncertain about it.

Now this is exactly the case before us. The Scripture is this moral history; the Scripture blames and

and most exemplarily punishes David for his adultery and murder, with regard to Bathsheba, and Uriah; but condemns him not for his severity to the neighbour nations, or for any treason or rebellion against Saul, but declares him blameless in all these material instances. In these therefore he must be innocent, and there must be some circumstances to excuse him, whether I have or have not hit upon the right ones.

But the argument is even stronger than this. This history hath been penned by the inspiration of an infinitely good, pure and holy God, for the making men happy, by the begetting the like dispositions in them; and yet this history styles David an innocent, a good man, a man after God's own heart, in every thing but the matter of Uriah, he must therefore be blameless in every instance but this. The unbeliever hath reason from the apparent morality of the book, to judge in this manner; the believer, from its inspiration, to be certain of it. This argument is undoubtedly conclusive; but I would not produce it before, lest it should be taken for an unfair advantage.

And now I have done with my antagonist; but I must not as yet have done with my reader; for he is to know, that he hath as yet seen little or nothing of the true character of David; the way to discern this, is not to look into the publick transactions of this mighty king; but into the tenour of his more private life, and above all into the retired devotions of the closet, and the publick adoration of that Almighty Creator who made, sustains, and governs the world; and will at the last, reward, and punish man for his good, or evil behaviour. The way to discern the man's true character is, to look to him where he opens his whole soul to this searcher of hearts, who

cannot be deceived. And because this latter part of our duty is universally slighted or denied by all our unbelievers, and thought much too little of by many believers also, I shall beg leave to open this matter, tho' in the most concise manner. And I entreat the reader, if he is not convinced by one, to give this part a second and more careful perusal, for the reasoning of it appears as manifestly true to me, as any proposition in euclid. The man of thought and learning will carry his reflections upon it, to a much greater length than it is proper for me to go into. It will be goodness in God to make rational creatures, because he will, by adding reason to sense, give a larger and higher sphere of enjoyment, and a capacity of much greater happiness, to the animal, than can arise from sense only, as is the case with the brutes. To make this capacity answer it's purpose, morality must be added to reason; because, without this rule to direct and govern it, reason will but make the creature much more pernicious both to himself and others. If morality be added, it will render a departure from it still more miserable, because this will to all the other mischief, add a self-condemnation also, a sense that this animal is wrong, base, hateful and deserving of misery. To creatures of this kind the highest happiness must ever arise from rational and moral enjoyments, because these fill their higher and better nature, that nature which is to govern them; and, as these are fitted for, so must they ever desire and want such enjoyments, and cannot be filled or happy without them. The highest object of this sort is the Creator, who alone is absolutely perfect, and doth in these and all other perfections infinitely transcend the whole of created excellence put together. If the divine Being would make happy such creatures as these,

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it must be by communicating to them a knowledge of himself and his perfections, and that principally of his wisdom, and of his holiness, justice, goodness; that is, of his reason and morality; wisdom may be displayed in every thing, morality only in his government of his moral creatures, and it is to this, therefore, that these Beings are to look for their highest happiness. What manifestations he shall make of himself must be worthy of him, and therefore expressive of the infinity of that nature from whence they proceed. If they are at all worthy of him, they must not only exceed the understanding of the worm man, but of the highest of all creatures. Wonderful therefore must the divine Being prove in the display which he shall make of himself in these matters, in the schemes which he shall lay, and the providences with which he shall execute them. The more various the ways are in which this is done, the more he shall make himself known, and the more good shall he do to the worlds. To have various providences administered, various creatures will be necessary, and because it is so, we find that there are different worlds and ranks of being to a degree truly endless to us; and to every one of these, we may be sure, that such providences have been displayed as best suited their natures, will most manifest their God, and do the greatest good to the world.

Man is a rational and moral creature, and as such, must be made happy, by the fore-mentioned means; and little and insignificant as he is in comparison of other creatures, to him, hath been exhibited the most wonderful dispensation of providence that ever the infinity of the Godhead did afford.

If christianity be true, it was the eternal purpose of God to create man in such a way as that he

should fall; that he should need, and that he should receive a redemption. And that this redemption should be procured for him by the incarnation, perfect obedience, grievous sufferings, and most cruel death of the son of God. That eternal and almighty son of his, by whom, and for whom, all things in heaven and earth were created, and do subsist. To him hath this inconceiveable mystery of Godliness been revealed; and here besides many other ends, both known and unknown, we have these two most material ones particularly served, that there is hereby such a love manifested to his creatures, and such a regard to morality, as nothing else ever could equal.

The way that the maker and governor of man must take to make him happy, must be to train him up to the love and practice of morality, and especially to that species of it which is fittest for him; and the way to enforce this morality must be by annexing such happiness to virtue, such misery to vice, as shall ever make it, upon the whole, better to be virtuous than vicious. To what an excess of advantage, on the one side, disadvantage on the other, this ought to be carried, can only be known to him, the infinity of whose knowledge can discern what justice in all cases, will permit, and the good of all his creatures doth require. This however we can be certain of, that these retributions ought to be exceedingly great, because the higher they are set, the more virtue, and consequently happiness will they produce. If vice and virtue have not always these effects and much more, if the reverse ever prevails in this life, there must be another for them to be administered in. Our surest experience then proves that there must be.

And

And now I return to David, whose character, I may have been thought by this time, to have forgotten. Religion is the means of making men happy, because it is the means of teaching, and enforcing morality; without which, he cannot be blessed; by which, he shall be so in the highest degree. Morality consists in a proper affection and behaviour to all with whom we have any relation, and these are God and Man. The lowest instance of our morality is, our behaviour to Men; and, how David acted in this point, hath not been as yet perfectly, indeed, but most imperfectly described. The Scripture history of him is almost exhausted, in giving an account of the government, the wars, the great and shining actions of a most powerful king. But the man is often forced to contradict his strongest inclinations in these matters, and it is therefore, in his more private transactions that we are to look for his real character; but of these, little is said in holy writ. And when this is the case, it is enough for us that we find nothing contrary to this duty there, and that he is in general, said, in this moral history, to have behaved well; for, if so, he could not have been deficient in this virtue. We are not however entirely destitute of proofs in this matter. His unparalleled generosity to Saul, his good behaviour to the countries in which he concealed himself, to the son of Jonathan, and to Barzillai, shew a mind deeply impressed with a sense of this duty. But his Psalms are still more expressive of it. For in these he not only inculcates the love and practice of truth and justice to all mankind, but of tenderness, kindness, goodness, also. And these were his devotions, wherein he opened his whole heart to the searcher of hearts, and one whom he hath so often declared, that it

is impossible to deceive. In this part of morality, then, we have good reason to believe, that he was not deficient. It is true, that the case of Uriah is an exception to this rule; but it is true, also, that men are so imperfect, that the best of us are deficient in some things; and do often commit single, and sometimes most grievous transgressions: so that the man's character is not to be formed by one action, but by the main tenour of his life.

The other, and that beyond all comparison the most noble and blissful part of morality, is, the love, obedience, and devout adoration of the true God; which, besides being the best, the only means of enforcing our duty to men, doth itself directly fill us with those affections, which must ever prove our highest happiness; and in this part, did David so greatly excel, that he never had a superior; perhaps, not an equal in it. For, because the knowledge of the true nature of the Divine Being, is necessary to begot these affections in us, and the worship of him, is the only, and the best means, to preserve and encrease them; therefore, do we find David amidst all the cares and avocations of the greatest royalty, principally taken up, with declaring the nature, singing the praises, and establishing the adoration of this one true God; and representing him as such a just lover and rewarder of virtue, and hater and punisher of vice, as must be most powerful to persuade to the one, to dissuade from the other. And so right, so earnest was his heart in this the first of all duties, that, to use the expression of a late great infidel writer, he hath strained all his wits to excel in it, and hath given such just and lofty descriptions of the divine nature and providence, as in them to outstrip, in fact, to leave all other, the

the greatest of poets, at an immense distance behind him. In this, then, was he most truly the man after God's own heart, in that his whole soul was filled with a most just and ardent love of the Divine Being; and he hath from hence, furnished the world with a great number of the most sublime poems, for ever to preserve and increase this devout temper of mind, which is the means, most necessary to, and productive of the highest happiness to men.

But this is not all, there is yet another part of his character to be opened, and that of the greatest consequence. That love of God which can do good to man, must be founded upon these providences, that the Creator of man hath thought fit to administer for his benefit. And the greatest, the infinitely greatest and most interesting of these, is, the redemption that Christ Jesus hath purchased for him. But because the divine wisdom, and goodness, thought fit to postpone his coming for more than 4000 years, and to prepare men for it, by many previous dispensations, of which the Jewish law and worship was to be the chief; so do we find the Divine Being inspiring the pure spirit, exalted genius, and ardent love of this king, so to establish this worship of God, as should best serve to shadow forth this redemption, and keep men in a proper disposition for the reception of it; and by the most minute description of several of the most interesting particulars of the life of this Redeemer, to demonstrate him, when he did appear, to be that prophet, which was to come into the world: to demonstrate him to be so, by most particular prophecies, of this son of his, above a thousand years before he was born.

58 *Answer to the History of the, &c.*

In this, also, was David the man after God's own heart, in that he loved him, for, and served him in those providences, which were best to manifest him to this earth; and by the good will, and peace hereby declared to men, to make the most glorious and blissful display of his infinite perfections, to the whole admiring world. The angels, the highest of them, desiring, and bending all their powers to look into this most astonishing mystery, the salvation of man.

F I N I S.

ADVERTISEMENT.

These following OBSERVATIONS came too late to be inserted in the Body of the Work.

1 Sam. 17. 4. In this Scripture it is said, *And it was told Saul that David was fled to Gath: And he sought no more after him.* It was plainly then the judgment of the Scripture, that he would still have endeavoured to destroy David, tho' he had twice so generously saved his life, had he remained any where within his reach.

The danger of suffering Shimei to go unpunished, is made apparent by 2 Sam. 19. 16, 17. *And Shimei came down to meet king David, and there were a thousand men of Benjamin with him.* This was upon the king's return, after Absalom's death, and shews Shimei to have had so much power, that the publick welfare might be deeply interested in his destruction.

That David had acted entirely by the commandment of God, and not with that abominable profligacy which is ascribed to him, in delivering up Saul's seven sons to be put to death by the Gibeonites, is confirmed, is put past doubt, by this Scripture, 2 Sam. 21. 14. *And they performed all that the king commanded; and after that God was entreated for the land.* This whole affair then was not wicked and offensive, but virtuous and well-pleasing to God. For otherwise the famine would not have been removed, but increased; or some worse punishment have been inflicted upon David, or his people in the place of it.

